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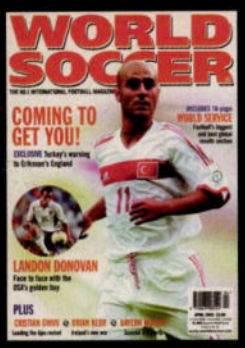

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April 2003

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THE RISE OF Turkish football has been one of the most significant developments in European football in recent seasons. From Galatasaray's UEFA Cup victory in 2000, to Turkey's bronze medal at the 2002 World Cup, to (on a different level) the acceptance of *Fanatik* into the ESM (European Sports Magazines) group, Turkey's progress has been undeniable. It is well worthy of cover-story status this month, starting on page 12.

It would be too much to expect that the Turkish national team's impending visit to England for the Euro 2004 qualifier at Sunderland will be treated with fairness and open-mindedness by my colleagues at the more enthusiastic end of the English sports press. But I would hope that in the rush to bury Sven Goran Eriksson some praise is reserved for Turkey. The Turks deserve respect for their achievements, although it should be noted that coach Senol Gunes will have several more days to prepare his team for the game than Eriksson. On page 30, David Davies puts the Football Association's case in the escalating club v country row. Astonishingly, it is the most prominent defence of international football from a member of the FA hierarchy in recent months. No national team can expect to succeed in a climate of such hostility and suspicion.

World Soccer's cover price increases by 10 pence this month, an unfortunate consequence of rising print costs. But we remain committed to bringing you the best possible coverage of the global game.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** *SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER* **SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 32**

Us against the world...Bayern Munich are under fire over a secret TV deal with media giants Kirch

Only in Bavaria

Keir Radnedge reports on the financial scandal that has tarnished the image of the Bundesliga's biggest club

BAYERN MUNICH are Big, at least in German football. They have won more trophies in the modern era than anyone and they generate more money through commercial deals, television, Champions League and matchday receipts than most of the rest of the Bundesliga put together.

Hence it follows that when it comes to scandal, Bayern generate controversy and headlines far bolder than anyone else.

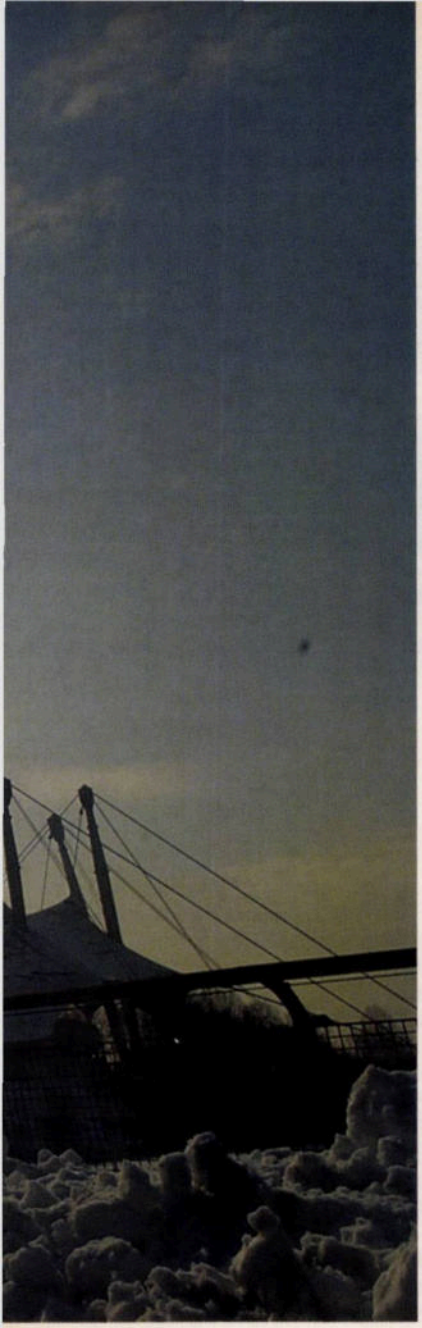
It would be enough for any other club to be sued by one of their old superstars and captains in a row over unpaid charity cash. Or to fine their latest record-transfer superstar for criticising the coach's tactics. Or to see the club captain's complex private life plastered all over the front pages. But while a maelstrom surrounds the activities of Lothar Matthaus, Michael Ballack and Oliver Kahn, the sum total pales into comparative insignificance compared with the Kirch Affair, in which Bayern appear to have been caught, bang to rights, with their hand in the till of German League football.

The bigger they are, the harder they fall is the old boxing adage. And 'they' do not come any bigger in personality terms within German football than Franz Beckenbauer, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge and Uli Hoeness.

Yet it is the size and weight of Bayern that will, after the requisite knuckle-rapping, get the club and their directors off the hook. The sad truth is that German football's ability to command its own house is undermined by the game's financial fragility. It needs the power and glory of Bayern Munich to keep the ship afloat.

Of all the three peripheral issues, the Matthaus row has been running the longest. Just before West Germany's 1990 World Cup-winning captain left Bayern for the United States in 2000 to wind down his career with MetroStars in MLS, the club staged a charity farewell game in his honour.

Around six months later, however, emerged the first whispers that Matthaus and his advisers had yet to pay any of the promised sums to charity. Matthaus, angrily embarrassed, referred the matter back down the line and then launched an action against Bayern for £350,000.



Confusion has reigned ever since over whether it can be settled out of court. In the meantime, the Ballack issue blew up.

Germany's self-sacrificing World Cup hero joined Bayern from Bayer Leverkusen on his return from Yokohama. His duty was to fill the inspirational 'star' gap left by the departure of temperamental veteran Stefan Effenberg to Wolfsburg.

At the time, Ballack was concerned he might be expected to fill Effenberg's anchor role too literally. Those fears duly realised, Ballack complained long and loud in a magazine interview, saying: "If you buy a player like me who is dangerous in front of goal, doesn't it make sense to play him there instead of at the other end of the pitch?"

Coach Ottmar Hitzfeld was furious. He had already fined Peruvian Claudio Pizarro for complaining about his rotation policy. Now, his status and authority dented by Bayern's disastrous Champions League exit, Hitzfeld fined Ballack around £8,000.

The issue had barely died down when Kahn, Germany's World Cup hero and iron-man captain of club and country, was revealed to be considering waiting until after the birth of his second child before leaving his wife for a younger woman.

Matthaus...Ballack...Kahn...all the sort of tales in which the media would normally revel. Yet space has been restricted because of the scandal that dwarfed all three.

In summer 1999 the then all-powerful Kirch media group was getting ready to renegotiate the rights to Bundesliga coverage. In a volatile TV environment, the support of Bayern could be crucial. Clearly, also, the club could earn far more by breaking away from the League cartel and selling rights to their own matches – as they had seen Real Madrid and Barcelona do to lucrative effect in Spain.

The rest of the Bundesliga clubs had no wish to see Bayern break away, of course. But they did want a greater say in the deal and proposed negotiating jointly rather than leave the deal to the German FA, the DFB. Bayern, however, sided with the DFB.

Several months later, on December 9, Bayern and Kirch officials met. General manager Hoeness, director Karl Hopfner and former president Fritz Scherer agreed details of a contract signed by top Kirch executives Dieter Hahn and Stefan Ziffzer. It guaranteed Kirch would pay Bayern, from season 2000-01 until 2004-05, the difference between the share-out income and what club and Kirch agreed Bayern might earn from individual dealing – around £10million for each of the first three years and £15m per season after that. In return, Bayern agreed to support the principle and practice of central marketing.

Kirch had paid Bayern around £28m when it collapsed under the weight of its own debt. Among the hardest hit were the Bundesliga clubs who depended on Kirch's TV money and had to go cap in hand to the government for a guarantee to stay solvent. Even then, several have struggled – most notably Kaiserslautern, who are having to sell their stadium to stay afloat.

Germany leads the way in auditing of accounts to prevent a club going too far out of line and setting off a domino effect that might take others down with them. But the key to regulation is that clubs declare all their financial dealings. Bayern did not tell the DFB or the League about the Kirch deal. They thus appear not only to have broken auditing regulations but also raised suspicions about whether they might have acted improperly in TV rights negotiations.

Hahn, challenged about the deal, said:

'Bayern appear not only to have broken auditing regulations but also raised suspicions they have acted improperly in TV negotiations'

"We wanted first refusal at Bayern because we were helping them prepare to launch their own TV channel. It was a serious contract. Uli Hoeness doesn't come cheap."

Predictably, the other clubs were furious. Schalke's general manager Rudi Assauer said: "If the votes in favour of central marketing were, in effect, rigged, that represents a scandal against the interests of all the other Bundesliga clubs."

DFB president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, with Hoeness on the working group that hammered out the League TV deal, said: "I never had the slightest hint there was a secret contract with Bayern. To all intents and purposes, Hoeness was a highly constructive co-worker."

Bayern have been unable to mount a credible defence. Beckenbauer admitted: "We made a mistake trying to keep this secret." Executive director Rummenigge claimed the deal was really about pay-per-view rights – except that pay-per-view regulations were laid down in the central contract with the DFB, and Bayern were bound to remain within its framework.

Other damaging accusations included the suggestion that the Kirch cash enabled Bayern to sign Ballack, Ze Roberto (both Leverkusen) and Sebastian Deisler (Hertha) last summer. Hoeness said: "We only got £14m before Kirch went bust, and half of that went in tax. We could have afforded those players even without this money. We haven't damaged the League or anyone else. If it weren't for our drawing power, the value of the overall contract would have been nowhere near as high for everyone."

A Berlin lawyer has filed a complaint with the Munich state prosecutors, and the German League, the DFL, has launched its own inquiry. Hamburg director Franck Mackerodt believes Bayern should be stripped of the 2001 title as punishment.

The ramifications spread beyond the Bundesliga. Beckenbauer's reputation will doubtless survive as he leads the 2006 World Cup organising committee. Rummenigge and Hoeness may not, however, cut quite such bright figures in the G-14 group of top clubs in future. Secret deals are not the stuff of which trust is built. Whatever the outcome, Bayern will retain their power...but the glory is badly tarnished.

Beckenbauer

Hoeness

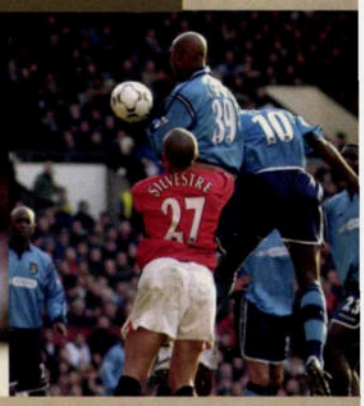
Rummenigge

The month in pictures

● 05/02/03...Bayern's Michael Ballack is voted German Player of the Year by *Kicker*

● 05/02/03...Liverpool suffer a humiliating exit from the FA Cup, beaten 2-0 by First Division Crystal Palace in a fourth round replay

● 08/02/03...Vitor Baia is left out of Luiz Felipe Scolari's first Portugal squad



● 09/02/03...Sean Goater scores the equaliser fo Man City as the Manchester derby finishes 1-1

Q&A Landon Donovan

The USA's best player at the 2002 World Cup talks to Keyvan Antonio Heydari

Great expectations...Landon Donovan

LANDON DONOVAN was the undoubted star of the United States' run to last summer's World Cup quarter-finals. Since then he has opted to stay in Major League Soccer at San Jose Earthquakes, playing regularly during the second half of the 2002 MLS season and sharpening his game. This was preferable to a return to Bayer Leverkusen, where he had been unhappy at spending most of his time on the bench.

But Donovan acknowledges that representing the United States has not been the same since Korea/Japan 2002. The expectations are much higher, with everybody – at home and abroad – expecting the Americans to compete with the best in the world.

WORLD SOCCER: Is there more pressure on you after what you did at the World Cup?

LANDON DONOVAN: When we go out on the street in the States a couple of people say something. It's usually soccer related. It's a lot different now. When we went into the World Cup, people said: "Oh well, if the Americans don't do well, it's expected." Now, every time we go out we're expected to win. We're expected to beat Jamaica and Mexico, and we're expected to play well against Argentina. It's a different story now.

Are you enjoying it?

Yes, but it's a different type of pressure. Something we need if we're going to get better.

Do you think Oliver Kahn was the best player of the tournament?

He deserved it [the Golden Ball award]. It doesn't generally go to a goalie, but the guy was awesome.

Perhaps it was because there weren't many great outfield players?

One reason was that some of the big teams fell early on. Portugal didn't make it out of the first round, neither did the French or Argentina. At least Ronaldo made a strong case for the award.

Are there many new youngsters waiting to break into the US team?

Without a doubt. You don't want to get to a point where you're stagnant and not developing any more. There are a lot of new faces. I hope they give me a scare too.

Project 2010 was a development plan for the US to win the World Cup in 2010. Do you see yourselves any closer to winning it?

We were extremely close to being in the last four in 2002, and we would have played Korea. We could have beaten them. If you look at it, a lot of things can happen in a World Cup. You have to have the players and be consistently good, but there are other factors that can help a team like Turkey, for instance, go as far as they did. Why can't we? We're going to keep getting better, talent-wise. There's no doubt in my mind, we can win it if a lot of things fall into place.

Do you remember your shot against Kahn in the quarter-final?

It was going in, I was sure of it. It looks different from the field than on TV from up there. When you hit a shot you know if it's in. But he made an unbelievable save.

Would you go back to Germany?

Sure, I'd do it again. I'm a much different person since I first went to Germany, not only about soccer. I'm extremely glad I went. I'm happy here but in the future, who knows? Anyway, apart from Germany, I'd love to play in Spain, the style suits me. England speaks for itself, and I'd love to play in Italy.

What about Leverkusen?

I'm extremely loyal. I came back to MLS, I'm playing with San Jose and they [Leverkusen] say: "We want you back." I don't think it's right. I'm not naive and I know anything can happen there. Here, they're not going to mess with you. If you don't play they'll tell you why. There, you have no idea what's going on.

Are the United States' achievements in Korea all just history now?

It's hard for us. In America people want to win. Then, one, two, three years will go by and they will forget what we did in Korea. We can't do anything about it.

Did you ever look at the US women's team and feel jealous at the support they get?

It's not jealousy, I'm maybe envious. I would love to have that sort of backing. From what I hear, it wasn't so bad during the World Cup, but I wish it would carry over.

09/02/03...Real Sociedad's lead at the top of La Liga is cut after they are held to a goalless draw at home by Espanyol

09/02/03...Oliver Kahn sets a new German record after going unbeaten for 803 minutes

12/02/03...Fabio Capello is tipped to leave Roma in the summer

ESM TEAM OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2003

LEHMANN (Borussia Dortmund, 2 votes)
PUYOL (Barcelona, 4)
MALDINI (Milan, 5)
ROBERTO CARLOS (Real Madrid, 4)
BECKHAM (Manchester United, 3)
VIEIRA (Arsenal, 4)
PIRES (Arsenal, 3)
GIGGS (Manchester United, 3)
MAKAAY (Deportivo La Coruna, 4)
VIERI (Internazionale, 7)
SAVIOLA (Barcelona, 6)

HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)

Given (Newcastle)
Michel Salgado (Real Madrid)
De Boer (Barcelona)
Maldini (Milan)
Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid)
Zidane (Real Madrid)
Nihat (Real Sociedad)
Giggs (Manchester United)
Saviola (Barcelona)
Henry (Arsenal)
Shearer (Newcastle)

DON BALON (SPA)

Lehmann (Borussia Dortmund)
Dos Santos (Marseille)
Fernando Meira (Stuttgart)
Campbell (Arsenal)
Maldini (Milan)
Beckham (Manchester United)
Camoranesi (Juventus)
Marquez (Monaco)
Saviola (Barcelona)
Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
Vieri (Internazionale)

FANATIK (TUR)

Cordoba (Besiktas)
Nesta (Milan)
Puyol (Barcelona)
Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid)
Pires (Arsenal)
Scholl (Bayern Munich)
Vieira (Arsenal)
Balakov (Stuttgart)
Nedved (Juventus)
Saviola (Barcelona)
Vieri (Internazionale)

FOOT (BLG)

Kahn (Bayern Munich)
Linke (Bayern Munich)
Van Buyten (Marseille)
Maldini (Milan)
Scholl (Bayern Munich)
Vieira (Arsenal)
Rothen (Monaco)
Serginho (Milan)
Alex Alves (Hertha Berlin)
Vieri (Internazionale)
Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Westerveld (Real Sociedad)
Michel Salgado (Real Madrid)
Puyol (Barcelona)
Van Buyten (Marseille)
Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid)
Pires (Arsenal)
Dyer (Newcastle)
Marquez (Monaco)
Nedved (Juventus)
Saviola (Barcelona)
Vieri (Internazionale)

KICKER (GER)

Cudicini (Chelsea)
Puyol (Barcelona)
Ferdinand (Manchester United)
Lizarazu (Bayern Munich)
Etxeberria (Athletic Bilbao)
Pirlo (Milan)
Parker (Charlton)
Rothen (Monaco)
Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
Vieri (Internazionale)
Alex Alves (Hertha Berlin)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)

Lehmann (Borussia Dortmund)
Puyol (Barcelona)
Maldini (Milan)
Campbell (Arsenal)
Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid)
Beckham (Manchester United)
Vieira (Arsenal)
Pires (Arsenal)
Saviola (Barcelona)
Vieri (Internazionale)
Koller (Borussia Dortmund)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)

Dida (Milan)
Metzelder (Borussia Dortmund)
Nesta (Milan)
Zambrotta (Juventus)
Beckham (Manchester United)
Limberopoulos (Panathinaikos)
Hleb (Stuttgart)
Giggs (Manchester United)
Vieri (Internazionale)
Koller (Borussia Dortmund)
Shearer (Newcastle)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)

Cudicini (Chelsea)
J Zanetti (Internazionale)
Chivu (Ajax)
Maldini (Milan)
Giggs (Manchester United)
Vieira (Arsenal)
Pienaar (Ajax)
Nedved (Juventus)
Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
Mutu (Parma)
Saviola (Barcelona)

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EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

Notes & quotes

"At this club the pressure is so great that it's no wonder that players lose their cool."
Paris Saint-Germain skipper Mauricio Pochettino tries to explain their 18 red cards this season.

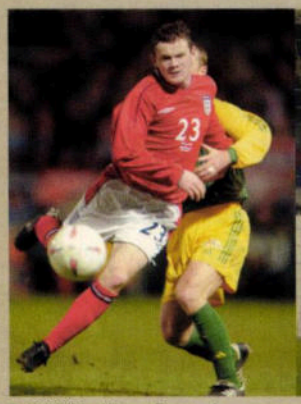
"Sergen's brainwaves are overwhelming."
Besiktas coach Mircea Lucescu uses a peculiar turn of phrase to compliment his side's eccentric playmaker, Sergen Yalcin.

"I'd like to ask him why he lost his self-control so badly."
Borussia Dortmund skipper Stefan Reuter after his team's keeper, Jens Lehmann, was sent off after receiving a second booking for aggressively remonstrating with club colleague Marcio Amoroso during the 2-2 draw at Schalke.

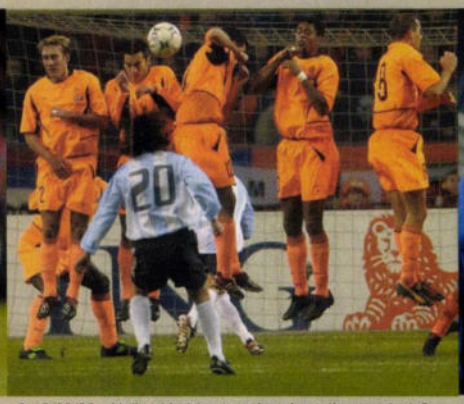
It's all academic...Carlo Ancelotti

"In defence we have four professors."
Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti must have wished his back four had had their thinking caps on during the disappointing 3-3 home draw with Atalanta.

The month in pictures



● 12/02/03...Wayne Rooney becomes England's youngest ever international



● 12/02/03...Holland hold out against Argentina to win 1-0 through a late Giovanni Van Bronckhorst goal in Amsterdam

● 12/02/03...Bernardo Corradi scores on his debut as Italy beat Portugal 1-0

● 18/02/03...Barcelona, under new coach Raddy Antic, thrash Internazionale 3-0 in the Champions League

Q&A: Cristian Chivu

CRISTIAN CHIVU is only 22 but is already the captain of both Ajax and his national side, Romania. This season, his performances have attracted the attention of a number of big clubs, notably Internazionale and Real Madrid. Although his Ajax contract does not expire until 2006, he is widely tipped to move on from Amsterdam this summer. He spoke to *World Soccer's* **Dominique Antognoni**.

WORLD SOCCER: Your performances this season have seen you talked of as one of the best defenders in Europe.
CRISTIAN CHIVU: Really, who said so? I certainly wouldn't. I haven't had enough experience, for one thing – I've only played in a few Champions League games, and the Dutch League doesn't stretch you very far. But I know I am doing well.

You always seem very calm and concentrated when you're playing.
I'm feeling very good about life at the moment. Things are going well, although I'm sometimes criticised for seeming too casual on the ball.

Do you owe some of your calmness to Ajax?
Yes, it's a great club – in many ways it's the ideal place for a young man to develop. You are given all the right values. Seriousness and discipline are highly valued, and you don't just talk all the time about football. Here, the basis of a player's game is his technical skills, and you are taught football is essentially a simple, straightforward game.

When you arrived at the age of 18 were you nervous or worried?
It wasn't easy for me to leave my home, my country, especially when I was going into the unknown. I knew very little about Holland or Amsterdam. For the first five months I lived in a hotel, which wasn't ideal. And to start with, I was on the bench – the squad was full. Then things changed for the better. I had a bit of luck as one of the regular players was injured. Everyone gets a chance in life but you have to know how to exploit it.

What would make you decide to move on at the end of this season?
The fact that I'm very ambitious. You have to keep moving forward in life, and Holland doesn't have the most competitive championship in the world.

If an offer came in for you, would Ajax let you go?
I wouldn't walk away from them easily. Before the championship began, the club asked me whether I wanted to stay on. I told them that they would be the first to know if I were considering leaving, so that they could line up a replacement.

How did the captaincy come about?
Four days after Ronald Koeman arrived, he told me: "The team thinks highly of you, you know how to show respect to them, you're full of enthusiasm – you're a born leader." Perhaps he saw himself in me or realised that by giving me responsibility I would come on in leaps and bounds.

What's it like to play in a league where there are three great teams but nothing else of note?
It's not easy playing only four or five games of any importance the whole year, especially when you have to go and play in European games. Just look at PSV Eindhoven. In Holland, they hit the net four times in each game, then they go and lose against Arsenal and Borussia Dortmund. But the smaller Dutch sides can cause you problems, too, as they are highly motivated when they play you. They rarely manage to beat us but they have a good go.

With Ajax you play in central defence, but with Romania you are on the left. Is it difficult to adjust?
At first, I even played on the wing for the Romanian team. In fact, Ajax also used me in that position, then they put me in the centre. But Romania continued to find me of greatest use on the left. To tell you the truth, against Bosnia, in the Euro 2004 qualifier, I'd been in that position for so long, that it suited me very well. It's very useful to be able to understand the game from every position – in today's football, it's appreciated if you can be multi-skilled in that way. At Euro 2000 I scored against England from left-back, so it suits me fine. In Romania, at Universitatea Craiova, I used to play in that position and also with the Under-21s, so I'm very used to it.

Ajax present and past...Chivu and Bergkamp

Chivu, Mutu, Contra, Niculae, Codrea, Lobont: are we seeing a new generation of Romanians who could recapture the glory days of Hagi, Dan Petrescu, Gica Popescu?
I'm sure we can do even better. When they were 20 they weren't playing in major European sides. We are, and that gives us an enormous advantage. We have 10 years or so ahead of us in which to improve and to build on our historical best – reaching the quarter-finals of the 1994 World Cup.

● 20/02/03...Celtic win 3-1 at home to Stuttgart in the UEFA Cup

● 23/02/03...Paolo Di Canio reacts angrily to being subbed in West Ham's win at West Brom

● 25/02/03...Manchester United beat Juventus 3-0 in Turin in the Champions League

Keir Radnedge

MEDIAWATCH

News and views from the world's press

Pay-related performances

SPAIN: Weekly *Don Balon* is publishing an intriguing league table that takes into account a club's spending power as well as their on-field performance. The wealthier the club, the more heavily they are handicapped. Top of the table, predictably, are Real Sociedad – successful on the pitch and with a modest but tightly-run economy. Bottom of the table? Barcelona.

New rival for Collina

ITALY: "While Pierluigi Collina was refereeing Vicenza against Siena in Serie B at the weekend, the big game between Juventus and Inter was put in the charge of Gianluca Paparesta. The draw for match officials did not lie. Paparesta, the 34-year-old from Bari, really has taken over as the top Italian referee.

"Perhaps he has been there for a while but it has taken time for all his qualities to shine through. Everyone always talks about Collina, but there is no doubt who has won the duel between them this season: Paparesta.

"The only area in which he compares less favourably is in terms of experience – considering Paparesta has refereed 11 times in Serie A this season compared with 15 for Collina. But in the big games Paparesta has shown up consistently well, while Collina has been far from his best." – *Alessandro Alciato in* Corriere dello Sport.

Challenged...Collina

Cruyff avoids Barça battle

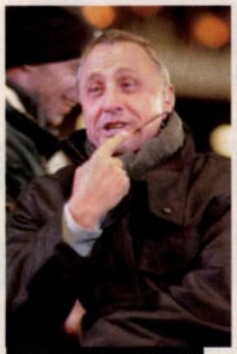
SPAIN: "Johan Cruyff wants it to be known that he will not be standing in forthcoming Barcelona presidential elections, even though he is the one candidate who would probably draw most support.

"Cruyff says: 'I am not going to get involved, not even to support one of the candidates rather than another. That is 99 per cent decided – though I would always leave that one per cent just in case something amazing was put to me.

"I have no intention of becoming coach again, nor technical director, nor general manager. President? Not that, either. Frankly, I would be a bad president." – *Johan Cruyff in* El Mundo Deportivo.

Partizan support for Matthaus

GERMANY: "After the third-class facilities in Vienna, Lothar Matthaus found in Belgrade a state-of-the-art training centre with hotel-style accommodation and seven pitches, plus every conceivable support service. When he took over at Rapid they were already nine points behind the leaders; Partizan, by contrast, were nine points ahead of the second-placed team. In Vienna he had a mixed reception from the fans, but in Belgrade even the most notorious Partizan fans treat him with the utmost respect. 'It's a different world,' says Matthaus. 'I think we can really go places.'" – *Wolfgang Tobien in* Kicker.



Not standing...Cruyff

Ronaldinho's an English cliche

BRAZIL: "The name of Ronaldinho pops up every time Arsenal's David Seaman concedes a long-range goal or when anyone tries a spectacular shot in English football. 'To do a Ronaldinho' has entered into English football language. Since the events of the World Cup quarter- finals, the player has been transformed into an English football cliche." – *from* O Globo.

Notes & quotes

"Luis Enrique is worth more than life itself to Barcelona."
Athletic Bilbao's German coach Jupp Heynckes expects great things from the midfielder now he is back in the Barça team after a long injury lay-off.

A lot to live up to...Tomas Rosicky

"Tomas Rosicky is a more complete footballer than Zinedine Zidane."
Dortmund defender Christian Worns perhaps goes a little far in his praise for his Czech team-mate.

"Obviously, some don't want us to be top of the table."
Real Sociedad president Jose Luis Astiazaran following a controversial 3-2 defeat at Betis.

"Unfortunately, you can't win with 10 men against 14."
Inter president Massimo Moratti talks conspiracy after his side were beaten 2-1 at Chievo.

The month in pictures

● 25/02/03...Real Madrid grab a last-minute equaliser to draw 1-1 in Dortmund

● 25/02/03...An early Diego Tristan goal gives Deportivo La Coruna a 1-0 win over Basle in the Champions League

● 26/02/03...Arsenal fail to find a way through the Ajax defence, drawing 0-0 in Amsterdam

● 02/03/03...Juventus go three points clear in Italy after a 3-0 win over Inter

GLOBAL VIEW

Paul Gardner

Bullying keepers? Knock 'em down to size

'The deep satisfaction of seeing an obnoxious keeper being put in his place was sweetened by the TV close-up of Dortmund captain Reuter giving Lehmann a roasting as he trudged off'

I'M MAKING Herbert Fandel my hero of the month. Make that the year. Hell, why not? – he's the hero of the decade.

Fandel, you need to know, is not a player. He is, of all things, a referee. In the Bundesliga. What he's done is to take on the monstrous regiment of goalkeepers – well, one of them anyway, and that's an encouraging start.

The incident that set my heart singing occurred in a Schalke-Dortmund game in February. Dortmund, playing against 10-man Schalke, had just got lucky – an assistant referee had ruled out a perfectly good Schalke goal for offside. Jens Lehmann, the Dortmund keeper, who should have been feeling mighty relieved, spotted the flag immediately, put the ball down and took a quick free-kick upfield to forward Marcio Amoroso. A sudden Dortmund counter should have been on – but it didn't happen because Amoroso wasn't paying attention.

If you know your modern goalkeeper, you can probably guess what came next. We have the sight of an apoplectic Lehmann racing 35 yards to rain down yells and curses on Amoroso, and to push him around for good measure.

Other Dortmund players arrive to calm things down – and Herr Fandel is there too. Without hesitation he waves the yellow card at Lehmann. Goodbye Lehmann – because he had already been given a yellow in the first half for racing upfield to protest about a foul on his team-mate Tomas Rosicky.

The deep satisfaction of seeing – at last – an obnoxious keeper being put in his place was further sweetened by the TV close-up of Dortmund captain Stefan Reuter giving Lehmann a roasting as he trudged off the field.

Lehmann's arrogant behaviour cannot be dismissed as a moment of madness. Firstly, because he had already been sent off for the same antics earlier this season. And, secondly, because what he did is typical of the way that the majority of goalkeepers now feel free to behave.

Would an outfield player race 35 yards to abuse and maltreat a team-mate for some minor grievance? Unlikely – but the goalkeeper, yes, that's eminently possible, because goalkeepers have got it into their heads that they are the lords of all they survey, entitled to scream and yell at everyone, to instruct all the others how to play...and to make it quite clear they are never to blame for any goals that go in.

Maybe someone can tell me when this bullying behaviour started. In the 1982 World Cup we got the most horrendous example of where it was all leading with Toni Schumacher's callous assault on Patrick Battiston – see the film of the incident, look at Schumacher's face and body language after it, and you'll understand.

But it wasn't only Schumacher in 1982. I recall a conversation in Spain with English referee Clive White, during which we seemed to be in total agreement that it was time to start sending off the hard men. That night I watched Belgium v Hungary. White was the referee. When Belgian keeper Jean-Marie Pfaff recklessly smashed into Laszlo Fazekas, White gave Pfaff a yellow.

'Goalkeepers have got it into their heads that they are lords of all they survey, entitled to yell at everyone and tell them how to play'

I asked White the following morning, why not a red? "Oh no," he replied. "We'd get into all sorts of trouble if we start sending goalkeepers off."

Clearly, that mentality is still around. Maybe it has something to do with the increasingly huge size of keepers. Maybe the Kahns, not to mention the Schmeichels, really do feel like supermen, able to browbeat and intimidate everyone around them. Maybe they're right – how often do you see a team-mate tell his goalkeeper to shut up? Or a referee?

Herr Fandel has struck a blow for sanity here. Lehmann, of course, feels hard done by. After all, he's merely aping the real

● 02/03/03...Gerard Houllier celebrates Liverpool's victory over Man United in the League Cup Final

master when it comes to stone-age keeper behaviour: Ollie Kahn. Kahn, complains Lehmann, gets away with it.

It was only last September that Kahn tried to strangle Leverkusen's Thomas Brdaric in full view of everyone ("I feared for my life," said Brdaric). For that outrage, Kahn got a yellow. That's all.

Yet Kahn feels he is another victim. "The moralists should be glad they have me," he says. "When Brdaric kicks Jens Jeremies' shin or when [Schalke keeper] Frank Rost shoves one of his own team-mates, nobody's interested. The name Oliver Kahn is easier to sell."

Kahn pleading innocence doesn't sit well. His record also includes a famous game in 1999 that featured a kung fu-style kick aimed at Dortmund's Stephane Chapuisat and, later, an attempt to bite the neck of another Dortmund striker, Heiko Herrlich.

Sorry, OK, but that's anything but OK. Bullies shouldn't expect sympathy, and bullies are what goalkeepers have become. They don't help their cause by giving every appearance of greatly enjoying the role.

Even so, Lehmann has a point. There is nothing in the rules about a goalkeeper not leaving his area. Yet referees, Fandel among them, may interpret that as unsportsmanlike conduct. The answer is not to allow the keepers to rant and rage wherever they like. Rather, it should be to install a rule aimed at transforming goalkeepers from swaggering bullies back into just plain old goalkeepers.

2003 Diary April

FAIR PLAY TO THE DANES

DENMARK'S second-string national side, made up of players from the hibernating Superliga, are in line for a FIFA Fair Play prize after an extraordinary incident on their traditional winter tour of the Far East.

The Danes were competing against Iran in a four-team tournament in Hong Kong when a loud whistle was heard just before half-time with the score at 0-0.

Iranian player Alireza Vahedinikbakht, along with most others, thought it was to signal half-time and picked up the ball in his own penalty area to give to the officials. In fact, the whistle had come from a joker in the crowd and referee Albert Chiu Sin Chuen felt he had no choice but to award a penalty for deliberate handball.

Sportsman...Morten Olsen

Mayhem ensued, with the Iranians justifiably upset. But the Danes found a neat solution. After consulting Denmark coach Morten Olsen, Brondby midfielder Morten Wieghorst deliberately put the penalty wide. Iran, naturally, went on to win the game 1-0 – then wrote to FIFA thanking their opponents.

"They may have lost the game, but they won our admiration," said the Iranian letter. FIFA's Fair Play prize has been awarded for far less in the past. So watch this space.

MUCH ADO ABOUT ADU

Much excitement in the United States, where Freddy Adu has been granted citizenship and called up for the Under-17 national side. Adu, born in Ghana, has been heralded as the great new hope of American soccer. He's already been the subject of glowing profiles in *Sports Illustrated* and *Newsweek*. His family have reportedly turned down a six-figure sum from Internazionale, while the US federation has restricted media access to him. The reason for all the excitement? Freddy is just 13.

However, confusion surrounds his official date of birth. *Sports Illustrated* could find no record of Freddy's birth at Bengali Hospital in Tema, Ghana, although it was recorded at the national births and deaths registry in Accra as having taken place at the hospital on June 2, 1989.

Unfortunately, the official documents were only filed in 1996, the year before Freddy's family emigrated to the States. All very mysterious.

REFS INJURED IN HIT-AND-RUN

Bruno Coue and Vincent Texier, French First Division match officials, have been seriously injured by a hit-and-run driver in Corsica, according to Spanish sports daily *Marca*.

Coue, who had refereed Ajaccio v Lens in the League only a few hours earlier, and Texier, one of his assistants, were loading luggage into the back of their car in front of their hotel when it was struck from behind.

The driver ran off while the two referees were taken to hospital for emergency surgery to repair leg fractures.

The game's up...Wolfgang Wolf

The other assistant referee saw the other car coming and just had time to dive out of the way. The two injured men were later said to be comfortable and out of danger in hospital, where they were visited by Ajaccio coach Rolland Courbis and his players.

The driver of the other car later gave himself up to police. A police spokesman said the incident was not related to the match, which had ended in a goalless draw.

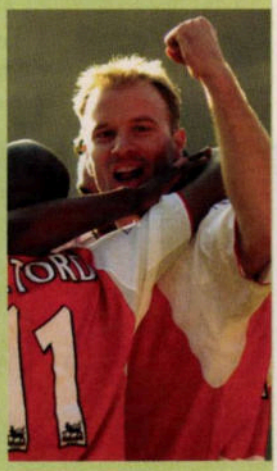
AUF WIEDERSEHEN, WOLF

So farewell, then, Wolfgang Wolf, fired as coach of Bundesliga side Wolfsburg. Only if Dick Advocaat were to encourage his players to eat more healthily (any takers for 'Advocaat advocates avocados'?) would a coach be more popular with headline writers.

CNN/WORLD SOCCER TEAM OF THE MONTH

1	Arsenal
2	Milan
3	Real Madrid
4	Juventus
5	Newcastle
6	Manchester United
7	Valencia
8	FC Porto
9	Internazionale
10	Bayern Munich

Based on a weekly assessment by a worldwide panel of clubs' form at home and abroad.



World Cup delight...Gunes' men will be hoping for similar goal celebrations against England in the Euro 2004 qualifiers

Revenge mission

Suna Erdem in Istanbul reports on the transformation of the Turkish national team from whipping boys to World Cup semi-finalists

THERE was a time when a visit to England by the Turkish national team was simply an opportunity for headline writers to play around with the words 'stuffed' and 'Turkey'.

With the head-to-head score between the two countries at 27-0 (including not one but two 8-0 drubbings), that's hardly surprising. But with Turkey now lining up for the Euro 2004 qualifier against England in Sunderland on April 2 as the top seeds in Group 7, not to mention World Cup semi-finalists, sub-editors might have to enlarge their vocabulary.

Painful memory...Lineker scores in England's 8-0 win over Turkey in 1987

"We expect a very different result this time," says Turkey coach Senol Gunes. "England are a strong team but we want to record another first by beating them."

England lost to Australia last month; Turkey are unbeaten since their World Cup semi-final against Brazil. So it's far from beyond the realms of possibility that Gunes' side could finally take their revenge.

The players are cautious. Striker Ilhan Mansiz and midfielder Tugay Kerimoglu both put their chances at 50-50. Defender Emre Asik says the English are "not unbeatable", but nobody wants to tempt fate.

Still, the trajectory of Turkey's improvement on the pitch is impressively steep. It was in 1987 that they were last annihilated by England. They qualified for the European Championship finals for the first time in 1996 but failed to win a point. In 2000, they made it to the quarter-finals. Then came the World Cup.

Gunes explains: "It didn't just happen. We made lots of mistakes: those 8-0 scores will always be with us. But in the 1980s attitudes changed as Turkey became part of a globalising world, and we began to follow what was going on out there thanks to technological developments."

German World Cup-winning coach Jupp Derwall, who came to Galatasaray in the 1980s, was the impetus for revolution. Rather than just focusing on winning the league, he tried to introduce an ethos of fitness and team play, bringing Germany-born and trained Turks into the mix. He also began to put in lasting changes such as grass pitches and decent changing facilities. "Now Turkey has proper training

pitches and warm showers – you can't imagine what this means," says sports writer Deniz Gokce. "When I played in the 1950s we had coal dust on the pitch."

Then came another foreigner, Denmark's Sepp Piontek, who as national coach overhauled the system and began scouting for young players across the country. Backed by an ambitious federation, he groomed Turkish coaches such as Fatih Terim and Mustafa Denizli.

As the framework changed around them, so did the players. As with the Brazilians, many Turks first learn their trade on the street and develop the technical skills for such a no-holds-barred environment – skills they like to show off as often as possible. When they also finally grasped the importance of fitness and team play, a Turkish style was created, full of spirit, confidence and creativity.

"We looked at the UK and liked their tall strikers and the way they played the long ball, we liked the Brazilians' technical flair and flamboyance, and we liked the Germans' discipline. After a while we found that we had created a synthesis of those elements," says Gunes.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the influence of Galatasaray's success in the 1990s. After taking Turkey to their first European finals, Terim created a team that won several League titles and shone internationally, lifting the UEFA Cup in 2000. Now regularly meeting – and beating – foreign teams, Turks have shed any feeling of inadequacy.

"There is so much more confidence now," says Internazionale midfielder Okan Buruk. "In the past we used to be so impressed when teams had players from the English, German and Italian leagues; now we're such a team."

"Before they would pat us on the back and say 'go on lads'," says Emre Asik. "But now we actually have a plan and professional preparation in all areas, so we have reason to be confident."

Okan, Emre Asik and many of their World Cup team-mates were part of an Under-18 squad that began lifting the silverware, becoming European champions in 1992. The current youngsters are hardly less successful, auguring well for the future.

Agents Premier Management have recognised this, opening an office in Istanbul to tap into such talent. The first generation of Turkish stars has already spread across Europe, albeit after a few shaky starts. Okan and Inter team-mate Emre Belozoglu knew they had arrived when they acquired a host of Italian nicknames, including "mosquito" for speed and tenacity. Rising star Emre, an essential part of the Turkey midfield, has even been compared to Maradona by the Italians.

That he seems unfazed by his success is a sign that the Turks now feel they belong at the top of the game. "I don't feel any pressure," Emre says. "I get excited before matches but not scared. Even though I'm 23 I have a lot of experience as I've been in international football since the age of 18."

It doesn't stop there. Forward Nihat Kahveci has been shining at Real Sociedad, while Yildiray Basturk is a regular at Bayer Leverkusen. And usefully for Gunes, veteran Tugay has hit a timely second wind in the twilight of his career at Blackburn in England. "Senol Gunes has asked me to make those youngsters run, and that's what I'm doing," says Tugay. "I'll retire after the second England match, and then it's up to them – the new generation are more talented, knowledgeable and purposeful."

While safe-as-houses keeper Rustu Recber and Aston Villa defender Alpay Ozalan are still key players, there is a changing of the guard taking place as the first successful wave of Turks give way to what they hope will be a second. Perennial first-choice striker Hakan Sukur has all but handed over to Ilhan, while Under-21 players such as Fenerbahce's Tuncay Sanli are waiting to take over at the top.

But it's not all roses. World Cup stars Hasan Sas and Alpay have both spent a lot of time on the bench because of spats with their club coaches; Galatasaray and Fenerbahce are having below-par seasons; and Gunes has had a media scrap with the federation. Having fought public unpopularity in the run-up to the World Cup, he might feel himself under even more pressure than Sven Goran Eriksson.

"The game in England has such depth that however bad things get you know it can always recover," says Gunes. "But we survive by results alone. We have no past or depth to keep us going so we have to keep winning."

But the fun of reaching heights they only recently regarded with awe has not worn off yet. Whatever the result, Gunes promises that his squad will put on an exuberant, entertaining show – something he feels has been lost in European football in recent years. "You must never forget that football is entertainment – it's not a trade. If it doesn't please those watching I believe it is nothing," he says.

Gunes doesn't include the Premiership or England in his criticism, though. His eyes light up when he describes the fun of watching matches in England and enthuses about the level of casual participation in the game in England. "Whatever the national team does, England is still the cradle of football," he asserts. The Turks cannot understand how the British media can ridicule the England team so much.

'We have no past or depth to keep us going. We survive by results alone'

Turkey coach Senol Gunes

Despite their recent success, the Turks still have a point to prove – they have yet to beat a major European footballing force. Achieving that and avenging past humiliations by England at the same time would be very sweet. "Whoever is picked to play must do everything possible; he must fight to the last drop of his blood," says Emre Belozoglu. "We have achieved a certain success and now we must show that it wasn't just by chance."

Shouting the odds...Senol Gunes has had the last laugh on his critics

Striking for gold

Turkey's World Cup hero Ilhan Mansiz talks to Suna Erdem

WHEN he carried his country into their first World Cup semi-final last summer with a golden goal against Senegal, Turkish forward Ilhan Mansiz became a superstar at home – and in Japan, where he has thousands of young female fans.

With the talent, the looks and the celebrity, he seemed to have had it made. But the Germany-born 27-year-old's career has been chequered with difficulties and opportunities nearly missed. In his early 20s, a brief, ill-fated foray into First Division Turkish football with Genclerbirligi pushed him to the brink of giving up and he had to climb back up via the Second Division.

Although he was top scorer in the Turkish League last season, he spent most of the World Cup finals on the bench. Since the World Cup, he has been plagued by injuries, a dispute with Turkey coach Senol Gunes and the country's unforgiving media. Now back on form, with his club Besiktas at the top of the Turkish League and still contenders for the UEFA Cup, Ilhan is a first choice for the national team.

WORLD SOCCER: After the World Cup there was a lot of speculation that you would move abroad, but you signed a new contract with Besiktas.
ILHAN MANSIZ: I did have some offers from English clubs but I have a few targets I still want to achieve. I want a League championship and I want to reach the highest levels of the Champions League – and to prove that my success last year wasn't just luck.

What about longer term? A lot of Turkish players are playing abroad now; don't you want to follow them?
Eventually. My biggest ambition is to play in Europe. At the end of my career I don't want to have to say: "I wish I had played in Europe." I'd love to play for a big team in Europe – the Italian League is one of the most difficult in the world. Then in Spain there's Barcelona and Real Madrid, Bayern Munich in Germany and, of course, Manchester United in England.

You're already 27 and you have two years left on your contract with Besiktas. Haven't you left it a little late?
There's still time. For a start we're still in the UEFA Cup and if we win the Turkish title we'll be in the Champions League next year and the European market will be open to Besiktas; before, it was only Galatasaray. I play a very physical game, and I believe if I keep myself fit I can play until I'm 35. I can do something pretty big in that time.

Galatasaray compete regularly in the later stages of European competitions, Fenerbahce sometimes. This year Besiktas and Denizlispor reached the UEFA Cup fourth round. Are you as surprised as they are?
I'm not surprised that we are still there – this year we have a very good squad and we hope to make a name for ourselves in Europe. But Denizlispor have been the surprise team.

The national team has come on incredibly since that 8-0 beating by England. You've seen German football too. Has Turkey really caught up?
Yes, we've made huge progress and really closed the gap between us and other European teams. However, in terms of infrastructure and youth training there is still a huge gulf. In Germany, for instance, five-year-olds can play on a grass pitch, but here that's almost impossible. Then there are areas such as nutrition – we are still behind on such issues.

You spent most of the World Cup on the bench while Hakan Sukur continued to start despite his bad form. How frustrating was that?
Everyone wants to be in the first team, of course. But in the last match Hakan and I played together. I think we complemented each other very well because he is much better than me in the air. The three goals in that match were the result of our joint efforts. An in-form Hakan Sukur always has a place in the team.

After the World Cup you were feted for a while, but then it was as if everything was conspiring against you, with media reports about your nightlife, with injuries, your row with Gunes when you went to Germany for an operation without reporting for a friendly against Georgia. That must have been really difficult to cope with.
I am someone who is loyal to himself, and I stand by actions that I believe are right. My injury had been there for two or three years but as it does with everything the Turkish media exaggerated it and said that my trips to Laila [an Istanbul night spot] were the reason. The doctor here made a mistake in the operation which is why I had to go to Germany. But you just have to get on with it.

You had some unfortunate experiences when you started in Turkey. You quit Genclerbirligi halfway through your first season and you've made perhaps slower progress than your game deserves. Do you regret coming to Turkey?
I regretted it at first. I wanted to prove myself in Germany and I never considered coming to Turkey. But I came under pressure from my family, who wanted to return home permanently and wanted me with them. I was very unwilling at the start so naturally it was very difficult for me to be successful. I gave up football completely

FROM AMATEURS TO ILHAN: THE RISE OF TURKISH FOOTBALL

- **1951** Professionalism introduced, followed eight years later by a single national championship, with teams drawn from the regional leagues.
- **1954** Turkey take part in their first major tournament, the World Cup, after drawing lots with Spain. But they exit after the first round.
- **1989** Galatasaray reach the semi-finals of the European Cup, but lose 5-1 on aggregate to Steaua Bucharest.
- **1990** Dane Sepp Piontek is appointed national coach.
- **1992** Turkey win the European Under-18 Championship, beating Portugal 2-1 in the Final.
- **1993** Turkey's Under-21 side, coached by Fatih Terim, win the gold medal at the Mediterranean Games. Galatasaray compete in the group stages of the European Cup/ Champions League for the first time, but finish bottom of their group.
- **1994** Turkey win the European Under-16 Championship, beating Denmark 1-0 in the Final.
- **1996** Turkey take part in the European Championship finals for the first time, but lose all three group matches.
- **2000** Galatasaray become the first Turkish club to win a European trophy when they beat Arsenal on penalties in the UEFA Cup Final.
- **2001** Turkey thrash Austria 6-0 over a two-leg play-off to qualify for the World Cup finals.
- **2002** Turkey reach the World Cup semi-finals, where they are beaten by Brazil. But they clinch the bronze medal by beating South Korea in the third-place play-off match.

'I was unhappy in Turkey at first. I quit football for six months but I realised I was doing the wrong thing. I'd wanted to be a footballer ever since I was a kid and I didn't want to give it up'

for six months after leaving Genclerbirligi but I realised I was doing the wrong thing. I'd wanted to be a footballer ever since I was a youngster and I didn't want to give up, so I decided to start again in the Second Division.

Is it true you also had cultural problems in Turkey?
Coming from Germany you have lifestyle and culture differences. The clothes you wear, the way you behave – people can behave towards you as if you have come from outer space. But with other Turks coming in from Germany and tolerance on both sides, we have begun to understand each other.

Is there any person in football that you particularly admire?
If you mean do I have any role models, then no. I remember as a kid being enthralled by Maradona in the 1986 World Cup. But I didn't have another hero. I want to develop my own style – to be my own personality on the pitch and bring my own talents to the fore, not copy someone else.

If you believe the Turkish media, you are a bit of a wild child. Yet people who know you say the picture is very different. Which is the real Ilhan?
It depends. When I go out during the holidays I want to relieve stress like anyone else, so I try to have a good time. But when I start working again I do whatever is required of my job. I work seriously, with discipline and self-sacrifice.

What do you see yourself doing when your playing days are over?
I can't say I'm planning to stay inside football. I don't see myself as having the qualities necessary to be a manager. One thing I want to do first is complete my economics degree.

You also have interests in fashion. Could you see yourself as a brand like David Beckham, with a fashion line and a film called 'Shoot It Like Ilhan'?
It's possible. Why not?

Smiles better...Ilhan's fortunes are on the up again

Midfield dynamo...Emre Belozoglu

Emre...

Paddy Agnew on the young Turk who has finally found his feet in Milan

FOR the newly-arrived foreigner in Italian football, instant success is almost never guaranteed. Even the mighty Michel Platini struggled along in grey anonymity for six months before he finally found his stride back in the 1982-83 season.

In more recent times, the Arsenal trio of Thierry Henry, Patrick Vieira and Dennis Bergkamp were prematurely and unwisely offloaded by Juventus, Milan and Internazionale respectively.

With fans and media impatient for instant success, Serie A coaches do not have much room for experiment or a painstaking, season-by-season team-building process, especially with young foreigners still trying to come to terms with a new environment and all that it entails. In such circumstances, talent such as that of Henry, Vieira and Bergkamp does not always get a chance to shine.

It is thus with some relief we can safely report that the biggest discovery and the most valuable 'new' player of Inter's season is Turkey midfielder Emre Belozoglu. The point about the diminutive 22-year-old, of course, is that he is not a 'new' player at all, having joined from Galatasaray in the summer of 2001.

Only the most attentive observers of Italian football would have been aware of Emre's presence last season. Not only was he handicapped by all the above-mentioned problems but he also had bad luck with a series of injuries. In the end, Argentinian coach Hector Cuper appeared to consider him little more than a useful reserve, fielding him in only 14 Serie A games.

This year, all has changed. Perhaps the crucial moment came in mid-autumn when injuries to team-mates such as Stephane Dalmat, Francisco Farinos and Cristiano Zanetti encouraged Cuper to give Emre a sustained first-team run. The result was an explosive, inspirational set of buzzing, midfield dynamo-style performances, the highlight of which were his two goals in a remarkable second-half fightback away to Lazio in early December when Inter came from 3-0 down at half-time to draw 3-3.

Two weeks earlier, he had shown fans nationwide just what he could do when scoring a Roy-of-The-Rovers 'cracker' for Turkey against Italy in a 1-1 friendly draw in Pescara.

Small but not stocky, balanced and able to play off either foot, Emre has a combative, aggressive attitude as well as an excellent technique and dribbling ability which, all combined, explain just why the Gala fans used to call him 'Diego'. Those qualities also explain why Cuper has been able to use him anywhere in midfield.

Emre is the living embodiment of the great 'Turkish Miracle' of the late 1990s which first saw Gala themselves win the UEFA Cup in 2000 and which climaxed last summer with the national team's largely unexpected run to the semi-finals of the World Cup. Apart from the second-round match against Japan, for which he was suspended, Emre played in all Turkey's games.

Emre served out a useful apprenticeship at Galatasaray under the enigmatic genius of Romanian maestro Gheorghe Hagi. Despite his relative youth, he had already won four Turkish titles, two Turkish Cups and the UEFA Cup before arriving in Milan. Given that pedigree and background, it is hardly a surprise that he

a star in the making

has finally 'exploded' on the Serie A scene. But he has no difficulty explaining just what took him so long to get going.

"To do well in Italy, you need to work hard but also need that little bit of luck," he says. "Last year, at the very moments I might have been given a chance in the first team, I either picked up an injury or I was on the way back from injury. Then, too, it was my first season in Italy and inevitably it takes a while to settle in."

It says much about the extent to which he has established himself this season that when he was injured during a 3-0 Serie A win against Reggina in early February, there was widespread apprehension in the Inter clan. Even more telling, perhaps, was the positive reaction that greeted the news, on the eve of Inter's top-of-the-table clash with Juventus in Turin on the first weekend in March, that he might be back for the big match.

Put simply, Emre has become a key player for Inter. If Cuper's team had finally begun to play some attractive football in mid-winter, Emre was certainly a major factor. If they struggled throughout all of February, his absence was again a major factor.

Inter's experienced technical director, former World Cup winner Lele Oriali, sums up the club's enthusiastic view of the Turk, saying: "Finally, after a year when he had lots of problems, he has shown himself for what he really is and what we knew him to be. He is a player of immense quality, and what he has done recently is only the beginning. He can do better, I guarantee you."

'Emre has shown himself for what he really is and what we knew him to be. He is a player of immense quality, and what he has done recently is only the beginning'

Internazionale technical director Lele Oriali

Emre is flattered but argues that for a midfielder, season-long consistency is more important than occasional flashes of brilliance.

As he looks back on his first 18 months in Italy, Emre is quick to acknowledge the role his former Gala team-mate, Okan Buruk, has played, saying "We were lucky that we came to Inter together and we've helped one another all along the way."

And the future? "I'm still young but I know for sure that in Italy I'll only ever play for Inter. Perhaps, many years from now, I'll be glad to go back to Galatasaray. Mind you, only after I've won everything there is to win with Inter."

How they line up: Turkey's squad and tactics

	Club	Born	Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS				
OMER Catkic	Gaziantepspor	15.10.74	9	0
RUSTU Recber	Fenerbahce	10.05.73	75	0
ZAFER Ozgultekin	Ankaragucu	10.03.75	3	0
DEFENDERS				
FATIH Akyel	Fenerbahce	26.12.77	49	0
ALPAY Ozalan	Aston Villa (Eng)	29.05.73	73	4
UMIT Ozat	Fenerbahce	30.10.76	18	0
HAKAN Unsal	Galatasaray	14.05.73	32	0
BULENT Korkmaz	Galatasaray	24.11.68	80	2
EMRE Asik	Galatasaray	13.12.73	20	2
MIDFIELDERS				
EMRE Belozoglu	Internazionale (Ita)	07.09.80	22	3
OKAN Buruk	Internazionale (Ita)	19.10.73	33	6
Yildiray BASTURK	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	24.12.78	24	1
TUGAY Kerimoglu	Blackburn (Eng)	24.08.70	82	2
UMIT Davala	Galatasaray	30.07.73	35	4
ERGUN Penbe	Galatasaray	17.05.72	30	0
AHMET Yildirim	Besiktas	25.01.78	1	0
IBRAHIM Uzulmez	Besiktas	10.03.74	1	0
TAYFUR Havutcu	Besiktas	23.04.70	44	6
ABDULLAH Ercan	Fenerbahce	08.12.71	71	0
FORWARDS				
ILHAN Mansiz	Besiktas	10.08.75	16	6
NIHAT Kahveci	Real Sociedad (Spa)	23.11.79	18	3
HASAN Sas	Galatasaray	01.08.76	23	2
ARIF Erdem	Galatasaray	02.01.72	60	11
SERHAT Akin	Fenerbahce	06.06.81	5	3
TUNCAY Sanli	Fenerbahce	16.01.82	1	0

TURKEY coach Senol Gunes favours a short-passing, attacking game that presses the opposition.

Since Gunes took over, Turkey have played with a back four of Fatih Akyel, Bulent Korkmaz, Alpay Ozalan and defensive midfielder Ergun Penbe, although an in-form Emre Asik could be a contender, as could Galatasaray team-mate Hakan Unsal.

The key man is Alpay, who, when on form, is a formidable barrier. If anybody does pass him, they will have to contend with world-class keeper Rustu Recber, who confirmed his status during the World Cup.

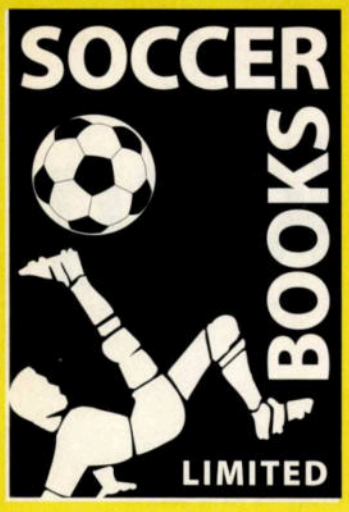
Turkey's strength lies in midfield, with a skilful four made up of Okan Buruk, Emre Belozoglu, Yildiray Basturk and the experienced, in-form Tugay Kerimoglu.

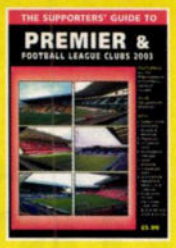
Gunes could well have an embarrassment of riches if Hasan Sas overcomes problems with Galatasaray to return to his impressive World Cup form.

There is a new look up front. The familiar gangly presence of Hakan Sukur is likely to be missing, while Ilhan Mansiz will be fired up to prove that he should not have been on the bench for most of the World Cup. He is likely to be accompanied by another new face in the form of Nihat Kahveci of Real Sociedad, whose contribution has been invaluable to his side's success in Spain.

If the Turks have a weakness it could be their temperament. Ilhan has just served a three-match ban, while Fatih, Alpay and Hasan Sas can also be loose cannons.

There have been a few new faces introduced since the World Cup. Fenerbahce forward Serhat Akin has done well since making his debut against Georgia in August, while recent caps for Ahmet Yildirim and Ibrahim Uzulmez have been a nod to Besiktas' dominance in the domestic League.





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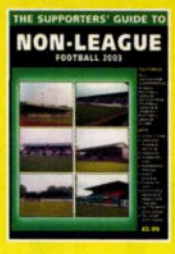

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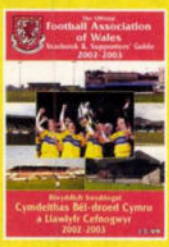

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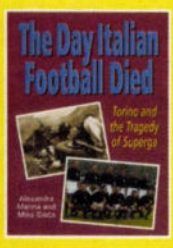

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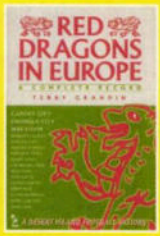

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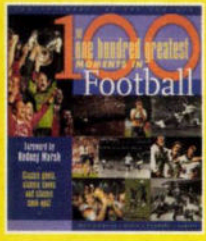

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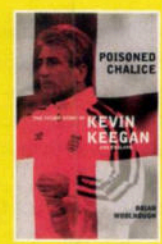

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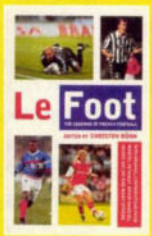

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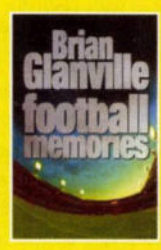

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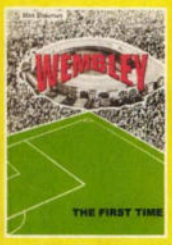

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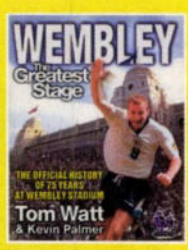

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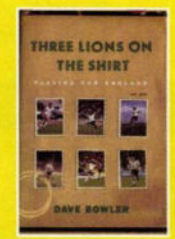

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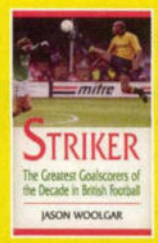

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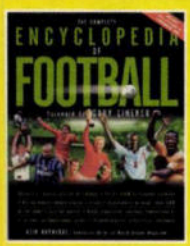

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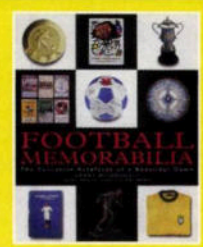

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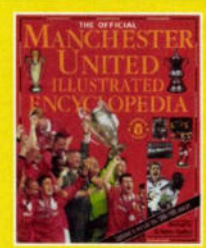

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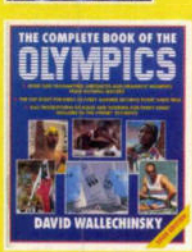

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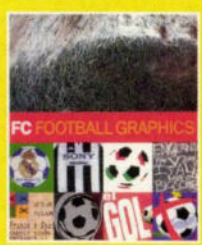

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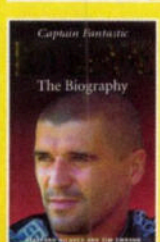

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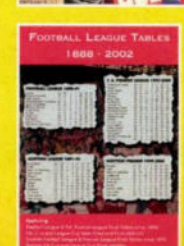

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Local hero

The Republic of Ireland's new manager talks to Kevin Palmer

MORE than a few eyebrows were raised when Brian Kerr was presented as the new Republic of Ireland manager. Yet few locals will have questioned the appointment.

Kerr, 50, has long been a household name in his home city of Dublin, and could prove an inspired choice to succeed Mick McCarthy. The Yorkshireman resigned last November after back-to-back defeats in the Euro 2004 qualifiers against Russia and Switzerland.

Kerr, who was promoted from his position as Football Association of Ireland technical director, is one of the most admired characters in the Irish game. His achievements are many – including leading Ireland to victory in the 1998 Under-16 and Under-18 European Championships and third place at the 1997 World Youth Cup in Malaysia.

Not surprisingly, Kerr does not agree with the view that his lack of top level, senior side experience will work against him in his new position. "I would like to think my record at junior level speaks for itself, and I don't feel there is anything for me to prove," he says. "I have been coaching since I was 16, so I have done my time. This is a big step up, but I'm ready for it.

"I would describe my management style as passionate and committed, and expect my teams to show the same qualities. I have achieved a lot of success both in the Eircom League and with the young FAI teams, and see no reason why I can't take that on with the first team."

While Kerr is confident he can revive a senior side that has flopped so woefully since the World Cup, he admits he has been overwhelmed by the demands placed on him since taking over in mid-January. "I'm sitting here a few days after my first game as manager [a 2-0 friendly win over Scotland] and it seems to be never ending," says Kerr. "The phone never stops ringing and I'm having to be very polite and say: 'Can you ring back in a few days?' I have a pile of post at home that is up to the roof. This is what I will have to get used to, I suppose.

"I know things will be different from now on, but that's the decision I made when I said I wanted to be considered for the post. It's a case of saying to journalists I have known for years: 'Look lads, you will have to lay off me a bit now as things are not quite the way they were in years gone by.' During the run-up to the Scotland game I was doing three hours of interviews a day. By the end of it, I was talked out."

●'I like to think my record at junior level speaks for itself; I don't feel I have anything to prove'

With big names such as Kenny Dalglish and Bryan Robson entering the race to fill McCarthy's shoes, few outside Ireland bothered taking up odds of 25-1 for Kerr to land the post. However, with the cash-strapped and much maligned FAI needing a major injection of credibility, the internal promotion was always an attractive and affordable option.

Kerr admits he had coveted the job and believed he could count on support from across Irish football. "I fancied it as soon as Mick McCarthy decided it was time to step down," he says. "But it was a case of sitting back and seeing if there was any support out there for me. As it happens, everyone in Ireland seemed to call for me to get the job, and the press gave me a lot of support as well. As long as I remain popular in Ireland, then I know I'm doing a good job.

"It is very flattering and deeply humbling to have so many letters from friends and people I haven't even spoken to in 20 years wishing me well, but we are like that in Ireland. We all tend to get behind each other."

Kerr's modest playing career was primarily spent with Leinster Senior League minnows Bluebell United. He then combined his venture into coaching at the likes of St Patrick's Athletic with work as a laboratory technician at University College Dublin. After claiming two League of Ireland titles with St Pat's, he was given his chance to work with the FAI's junior teams in 1996.

Kerr is well known throughout the UEFA coaching fraternity. He is a close friend of Liverpool boss Gerard Houllier and has good relations with most Premiership managers. Having moulded the likes of Damien Duff, Robbie Keane and John O'Shea into international stars, Kerr has proved his coaching skills.

In addition, his reputation for being a perfectionist in his preparations should help improve the amateur reputation of the FAI in the wake of the Roy Keane fiasco before last summer's World Cup. The Manchester United star cited the poor facilities at a pre-Korea/Japan training camp as one of his reasons for walking out on the team.

McCarthy's final days in charge were overshadowed by Keane's absence, and the same proved to be true for Kerr's early reign. After a positive meeting with the midfielder, the new man believed he would have him in his side for

Victory parade...Kerr (centre) and team celebrate winning the 1998 European Under-18 Championship

the spring Euro 2004 qualifiers against Georgia and Albania. Yet hours before the Scotland friendly, Keane announced his international retirement, citing a serious hip injury as the reason behind his decision. "The timing wasn't the best, but that's the way things happen sometimes," says Kerr. "I had a good meeting with Roy and he seemed very keen to be involved, but it wasn't to be." Many in Ireland claim that Keane's decision to retire had actually been made by Man Utd boss Sir Alex Ferguson.

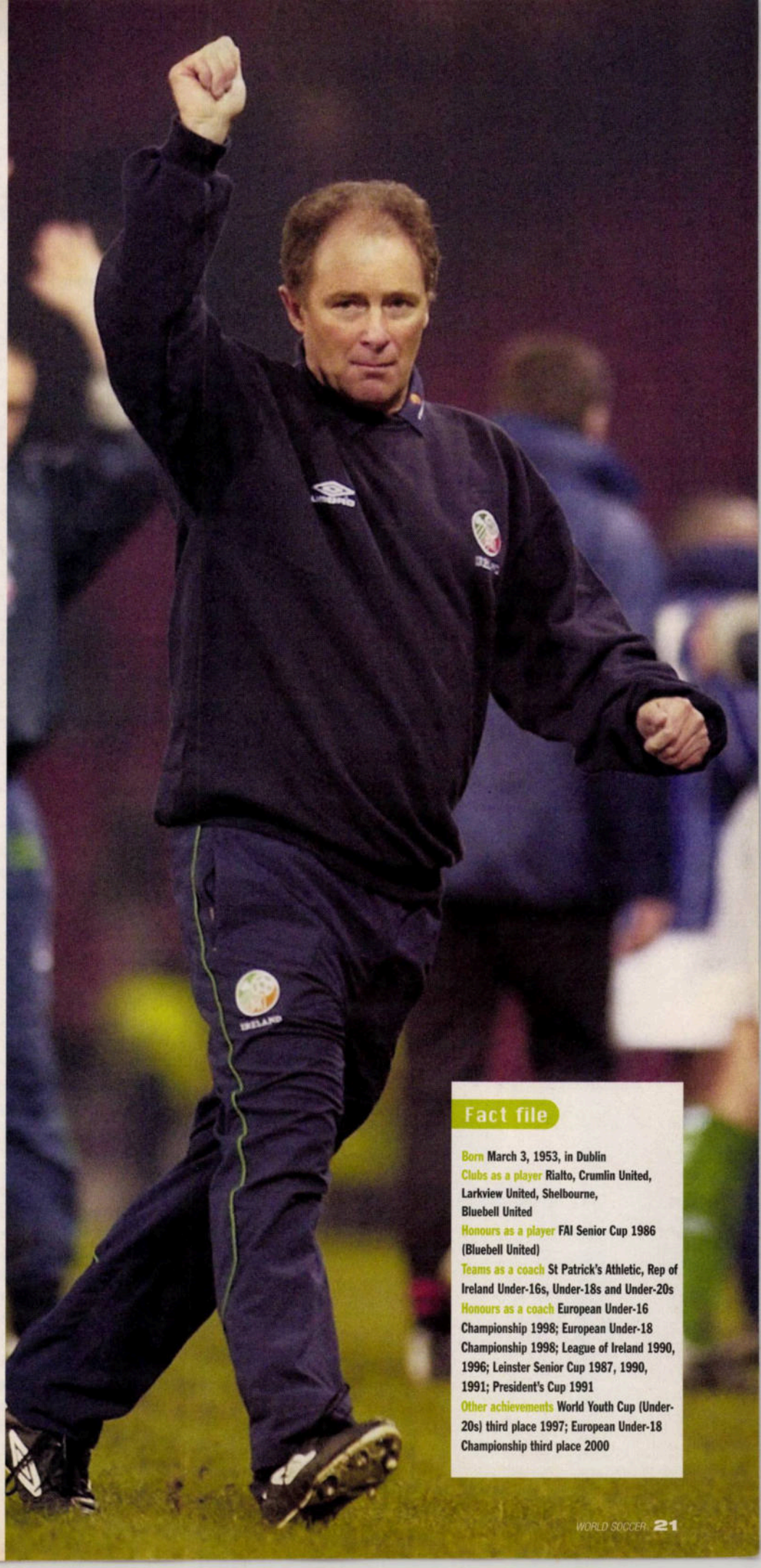
"When the news came through, I sat down with the players and told them Roy would not be returning," Kerr continues. "I sensed a general nod of agreement and a feeling of relief that there was closure on the whole subject. We were going to move on together now and at least it's all out of the way."

The early signs are that Keane will be the loser. The team appeared to be released from their slumber in beating Scotland at Hampden Park, and Kerr is looking to the future with optimism. "The performance in Scotland was positive and that's all I ever wanted," he states. "We had a difficult few days in the run-up to the game, with one thing and another, and it was the first real test of my management. You could see from the attitude of the team that we have a good chance to do something special in the next few years.

"I have worked with a lot of young lads in the Ireland side before, but my connections go much deeper. I have been a part of the FAI set-up for some time now and have a deep knowledge of the game at all levels in Ireland. From top to bottom, my view is it's in a better state than at any time in the past."

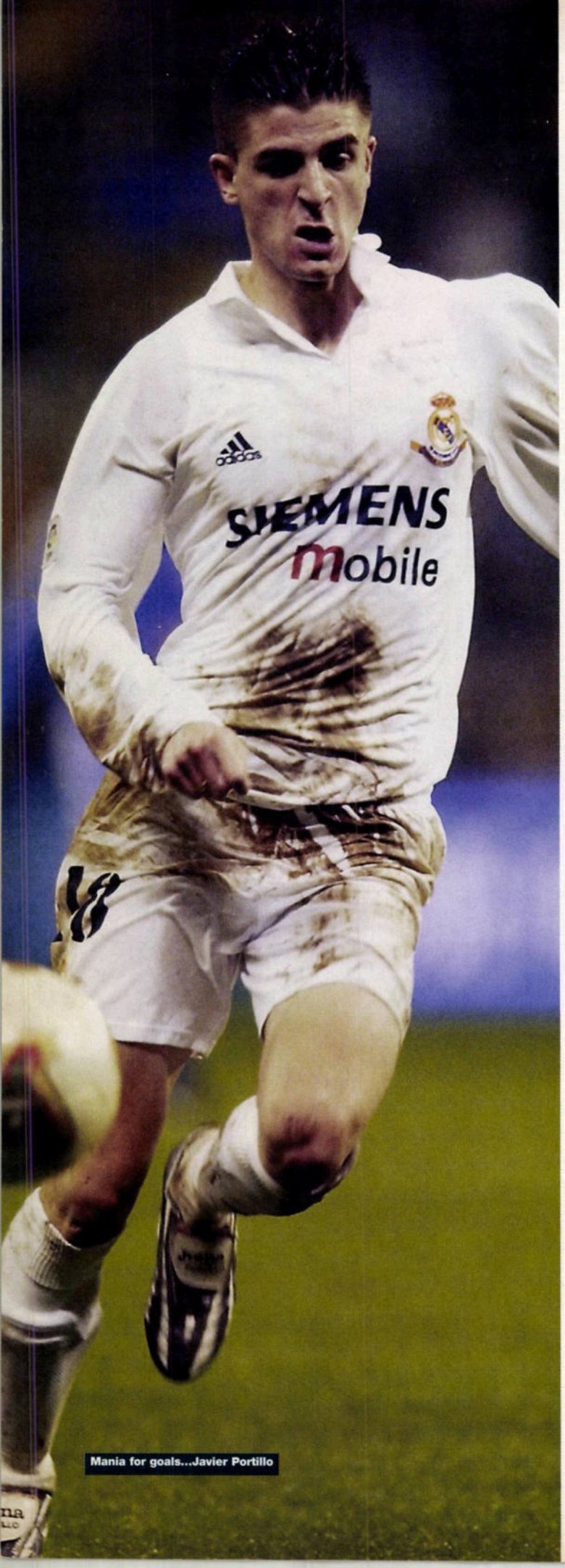
Kerr can take much of the credit for that, and if he can plot Ireland's route to Euro 2004 from what appears to be a hopeless position, his reputation will be further enhanced. If he fails, McCarthy will doubtless be blamed. "After losing our first two games in the group, we could be in a much better position now, that's obvious," says Kerr. "But if you ask me whether we can qualify, I would give a very positive 'yes'."

The new man is certainly not short on confidence. "First and foremost, I am an Irish fan who has been given the chance to do the best job there is in the game," he asserts. "I am a lucky fella and have to make the most of this opportunity, but I never had any doubt that I could do this. You have to believe in yourself if you want your team to believe in you."



Fact file

Born March 3, 1953, in Dublin
Clubs as a player Rialto, Crumlin United, Larkview United, Shelbourne, Bluebell United
Honours as a player FAI Senior Cup 1986 (Bluebell United)
Teams as a coach St Patrick's Athletic, Rep of Ireland Under-16s, Under-18s and Under-20s
Honours as a coach European Under-16 Championship 1998; European Under-18 Championship 1998; League of Ireland 1990, 1996; Leinster Senior Cup 1987, 1990, 1991; President's Cup 1991
Other achievements World Youth Cup (Under-20s) third place 1997; European Under-18 Championship third place 2000



Mania for goals...Javier Portillo

Step aside, Ronaldo....

Record-breaking kid making his mark in Madrid

THE question is hanging in the air around the Bernabeu. The voracious Spanish sports press have thus far shied away from projecting it in their usual huge headlines. But it's in everyone's mind – why did Real Madrid spend so much time, money and effort on the enigmatic wonders of Ronaldo when they had Javier Garcia Portillo in reserve?

The 20-year-old centre-forward created international waves with his first-touch, last-minute equaliser against Borussia Dortmund in the Westfalenstadion in the Champions League in late February. He had been on the pitch only 59 seconds.

Dortmund's players fell around in anguish. Their apparent victory had been converted into a draw, which allowed Madrid to maintain their tenuous hold on second place in second phase Group C.

But that is the 'Portigol' effect. Earlier this season he scored during his single minute on the pitch against Valencia. The Saturday before the trip to Dortmund he took all of three minutes to score the goal that secured a 3-1 win over Valladolid. No wonder sports director Jorge Valdano's priority on returning from Germany was to hammer out a third contract extension in two years.

"Look out, Ronaldo," scream Portillo's goals. He has glided ahead of the disgruntled and ill-used Fernando Morientes in the pecking order and taken a decisive stride clear of youth attack team-mate Tote.

But while Portillo may start every Madrid League game on the bench, he has been first-choice for Spain's Under-21s since last April and always led Madrid's attack in the run to this season's Copa Del Rey quarter-finals.

Portillo is a midweek specialist. In March last year he made an explosive senior debut with a 25-yard goal against Panathinaikos in Athens in the Champions League. The next weekend he came back down to earth with a bump. Sent back to Madrid's Third Division nursery team, he marked the occasion with a four-goal haul. Coach Vicente Del Bosque had no doubts about entrusting Portillo with his substitute's chance in Athens: it was Del Bosque who had overseen his original rise through the youth ranks.

Portillo's family run a restaurant in Aranjuez, south of the capital. Madrid scouts spotted him in a kids' tournament and signed him on junior forms – and in exchange for a bag of footballs – on September 3, 1994. The following weekend he scored five goals on his Madrid youth debut; he was still only 12.

Born on March 30, 1982, Portillo boasts more goals – 700-plus – than any other player in the history of Madrid's youth section, more even than his great hero Raul. Portillo was age-group league top scorer eight times and takes his football so seriously he watches match videos up to six times over to analyse weaknesses in his game.

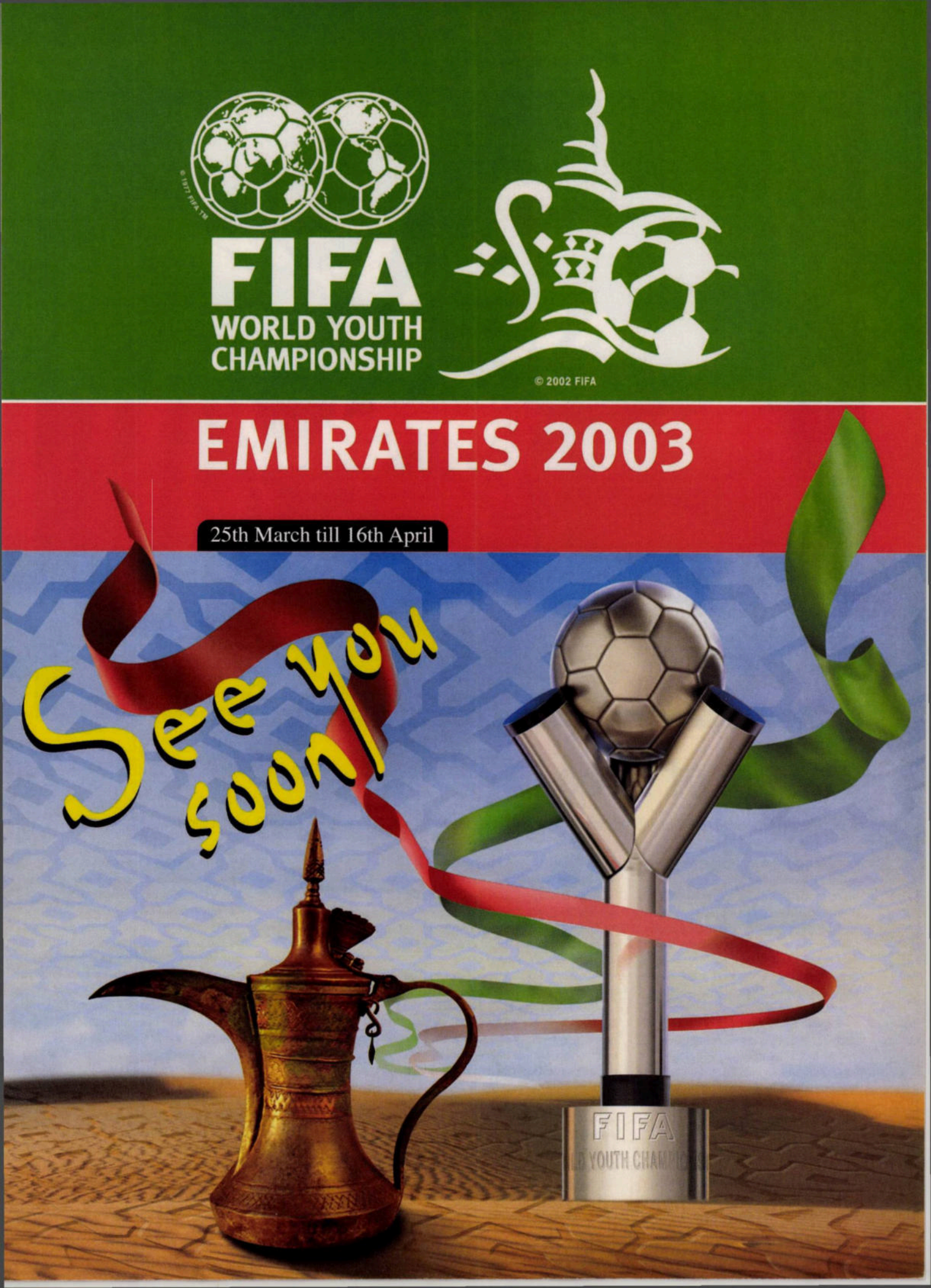
In his spare time he plays computer football games in which he can maintain his mania for scoring goals. "I'm only 20 and have lots to learn, especially to improve with my right foot," says Portillo. "My aim is to keep working at my game so I can score whenever I get a chance. Then we'll take it from there."

Valdano says: "Portillo's a terrific specialist at scoring goals and it's a pity he doesn't get more time in the League; but that's what happens with the big squad that we need."

Valdano considered loaning out Portillo for the rest of the season to gain first-team experience. There was a long queue at the door but Portillo was not interested – which says a great deal about his self-confidence. It also hinted at an unspoken suspicion within the squad that Ronaldo could break down again at any time.

Whether, in that case, Portillo would ever let Ronaldo back in the team is a fascinating question. Madrid's fans think they know the answer – and it's not one the Brazilian has had to contemplate before. That, surely, says everything about the potential of the kid from Aranjuez.

Keir Radnedge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All for the cause...Deco's willingness to battle, allied to his superb skills, have helped keep Porto way ahead of the pack this season

The art of Deco

A Brazil-born playmaker and Bobby Robson's former No 2 are driving the Portuguese League leaders. Nick Bidwell reports

THE year 2003 is likely to be a memorable one for all connected with Futebol Clube do Porto. Despite delays to the construction of the club's new £65 million Das Antas stadium caused by political infighting over funding, the arena should be ready by September. Meanwhile the team, showing much more consistency than the bureaucrats, are overwhelming favourites to seal their first title since 1999.

Inspired by the brilliance of Brazil-born Deco in midfield, Porto were unbeaten in their first 21 League games before surprisingly slipping up 2-1 at Maritimo in mid-February – an outstanding sequence which featured 13 straight wins. They have been a class apart throughout, leaving nearest challengers Benfica trailing far behind as winter turned to spring.

It has meant total vindication for self-assured young coach Jose Mourinho, who for six years served as Bobby Robson's deputy at Sporting Lisbon, Porto and Barcelona and later worked under Louis Van Gaal at Camp Nou.

After leaving Uniao Leiria for Porto in January 2002, Mourinho stunned many at his first press conference by promising that his team would win the championship the following season. If many of the media considered his words arrogant bluster, they have since had to revise their opinions.

Often described as cold and distant, Mourinho may not be everybody's glass of port. Yet in terms of coaching ability he is outstanding. On the training ground he is meticulous and demanding, concerned with even the smallest detail; he is also a fine strategist – not surprising for someone who, as a teenager, loved to dissect the playing styles of professional teams.

Mourinho is in many ways a Portuguese version of Arrigo Sacchi, the former boss of the wonderful Milan side of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Like Sacchi, he did not make the grade as a player; like Sacchi he sets great store by a high-tempo pressing game and tactical discipline. Put simply, no other team in Portugal is better organised than Mourinho's Porto.

'I'm not saying that we're unbeatable, but on our day we have the quality to win anywhere'

Porto coach Jose Mourinho

Known as 'Ze' to his friends, Mourinho has also proved himself an excellent motivator. He has grafted an indomitable spirit on to a Porto side that used to run up the white flag a little too readily at times. It is no coincidence that the class of 2002-03 have made a habit of coming on strong in the later stages of games. While the chasing pack may hope that complacency sets in at Porto, the iron-fisted Mourinho will surely not allow that to happen.

How Benfica must wince on glancing at the League table. Mourinho was in charge there during the 2000-01 season but was sacked after just three months. It was never a particularly happy marriage. Benfica fans considered him a second-rate coach unworthy of their great club; the ▶

Coaching success...Mourinho

THE COACH

Jose MOURINHO
Born: 26.01.63. After an unconvincing playing career at youth level with Belenenses and Rio Ave, Mourinho has enjoyed much more success as a coach. He was an assistant to Bobby Robson for six years at Sporting Lisbon, FC Porto and Barcelona, but when Robson left the latter for a second spell at PSV Eindhoven, Mourinho remained in Catalonia to work under Louis Van Gaal. Early in the 2000-01 season, he began to fly solo, first in a short-lived spell at Benfica, then with Uniao Leiria and FC Porto since January 2002.

GOALKEEPERS

NUNO Herlander Simoes Esprito Santo
25.01.74. Very capable deputy brought in last summer from Deportivo La Coruna, where he gained Champions League experience.

VITOR Manuel Martins BAIA
15.10.69. Long-serving keeper and club vice-captain. Has 80 caps for Portugal, but the signs are that his international career is over; new Portugal boss Luiz Felipe Scolari omitted him from the squad for the February friendly with Italy, the first time a fit Baia had been overlooked since the age of 19.

DEFENDERS

JORGE Paulo COSTA Almeida
14.10.71. While the skipper and central defender can be exposed by forwards of pace, he still has much to offer, not least his great international experience, commitment and leadership.

MARIO Fernando Magalhaes da SILVA
24.04.77. Left-back or left-sided midfielder who joined Porto in 2001 following a season of mixed emotions with Nantes. The club were champions of France but he was often on the bench. Oporto-born, he is a product of the Boavista youth system.

NUNO Jorge Pereira Silva VALENTE
12.09.74. Mourinho went back to former club Uniao Leiria to sign this adventurous left-back last summer. Technically very polished, a good dribbler and crosser, but can be drawn out of position defensively. Made his debut for Portugal against England last September.

PAULO Renato FERREIRA
18.01.79. In excellent form at right-back since arriving from Vitoria Setubal in the close season, and Mourinho appreciates his versatility. Also capped for the first time against England.

PEDRO EMANUEL dos Santos Martins Silva (Ang)
11.02.75. Centre-back who caused a storm last summer when he quit Boavista to join Porto, adding insult to injury by claiming Boavista were yesterday's club. Abrasive, and strong in the air.

RICARDO Alberto Silveira CARVALHO
18.05.78. Elegant yet competitive centre-back who is one of the most promising young players in the country. However, he has to play a waiting game at the moment because of the good form of Pedro Emanuel and Jorge Costa. Bought from Leca in 1997, he was then loaned out to Vitoria Setubal, Santa Clara and Alverca before returning to Porto in 2001.

Plenty to offer...Jorge Costa

RICARDO Miguel Moreira COSTA
16.05.81. Fine young central defender who was promoted to the first-team squad last season. Star of the Portuguese Under-21s.

In form...Paulo Ferreira

Carlos Alberto Oliveira SECRETARIO
12.05.70. The arrival of Paulo Ferreira and persistent knee trouble have restricted the first-team opportunities of this enterprising right-back. First made a name for himself at Porto in the mid-1990s, but flopped at Real Madrid in 1996. Has 35 caps for Portugal.

MIDFIELDERS

Dmitri ALENICHEV (Rus)
20.10.72. Busy, inventive Russian attacking midfielder but has never quite fulfilled his potential since leaving Moscow Spartak for the West in 1998. Moved to Porto in 2000 after two seasons in Italy with Roma and Perugia.

CAPUCHO (Nuno Fernando Goncalves Rocha)
21.02.72. At his best, the Portuguese international can do it all: win the ball, raid purposefully down the right flank and score his share of goals. But hampered by injury problems, he has not been so effective this season. Joined Porto in 1997.

COSTINHA (Francisco Jose da Costa)
01.12.74. Don't be fooled by his wiry build. The Portuguese international can tackle with the best and has the stamina to run all day. More than acceptable technically and scores goals too. Joined Porto from Monaco after starring for Portugal at Euro 2000.

DECO (Anderson Luis da Sousa)
27.08.77. Brazil-born but recently granted Portuguese citizenship, the extravagantly gifted playmaker-cum-goalscorer has been pivotal to Porto's domestic dominance this term. A consummate dribbler and free-kick expert, he played for Nacional and Corinthians of Sao Paulo before leaving for Portugal in 1997. Turned out for Alverca and Salgueiros before joining Porto in 1999. Can retaliate too easily.

MANICHE (Nuno Ricardo Oliveira Ribeiro)
11.11.77. Blew hot and cold at Benfica and was eventually released last summer. Yet at Porto the dynamic, skilful midfield all-rounder has been a revelation. His self-belief has never been greater.

TIAGO Cesar Moreira Pereira
04.07.75. Another of Mourinho's old boys from Uniao Leiria, the defensive midfielder joined Porto in the close season. Not always appreciated by the fans, but the coach likes his industry and tactical awareness.

FORWARDS

CESAR PEIXOTO Silva Jorge
12.05.80. A former Portuguese Under-21 star, this speedy left-winger has not been a regular starter since arriving from Belenenses last summer. However, the recent signs are that he is at last finding his feet.

CLAYTON Ferreira Cruz (Bra)
19.07.75. Intelligent, refined left-sided attacker whose star has waned over the past year or so. Likely to leave at the end of the season.

DERLEI (Vanderlei Fernandes Silva) (Bra)
14.07.75. Runner-up in the Portuguese scoring chart last season with 21 goals for Uniao Leiria and moved to Porto in the summer. Once with top Brazilian sides Guarani and Sao Paulo, he is being used on the left side of the Porto attack rather than in his customary central striking role.

Sharp...Helder Postiga

HELDER Manuel Marques POSTIGA
02.08.82. Extremely sharp in front of goal this season, the young striker was rewarded with a first full cap for Portugal in the friendly with Italy in February. Would have cast off in his father's fishing boat if he had not made the grade as a footballer.

Edgaras JANKAUSKAS (Lit)
12.03.75. Lithuanian bought from Real Sociedad last summer after spending the previous campaign with arch-rivals Benfica. Although not an automatic starter for Porto, he has frequently come off the bench to score vital goals. Former clubs include CSKA Moscow, Torpedo Moscow and Club Brugge.

Julio Castanheira Afonso Alves MARCO FERREIRA
12.03.78. Promising right-winger signed from Vitoria Setubal during the winter break. Won his first full cap for Portugal in a friendly against Tunisia in Lisbon last October, as a late substitute for Luis Figo.

FC PORTO

Adopted son...Deco is due to make his debut for Portugal's national side against Brazil

FC PORTO HOW THEY LINE UP

IN FRONT of first-choice keeper Vitor Baia, a four-man defence is marshalled by captain Jorge Costa. Although not one of the usual back four was at the club last season, the unit has bedded down quicker than anyone could have expected. The technique of new full-backs Paulo Ferreira and Nuno Valente has dovetailed well with stopper Pedro Emanuel and veteran combatant Jorge Costa. Deco is the new star in midfield, backed up by the more defensive Costinha and Maniche. In attack, Helder Postiga is an exciting prospect, with Capucho operating on the right flank and Derlei on the left. Jankauskas is used as a sub, while Cesar Peixoto occasionally starts instead of Derlei.

'Deco is truly world class. Not only does he produce great individual brilliance, but he's also willing to chase back and tackle for the good of the team'

Mourinho on his star midfielder

board saw him only as a stop-gap appointment until they could bring in Toni, the last coach to lead the Eagles to the championship in 1994.

In fact, Mourinho very nearly made a sensational return to Benfica when Toni quit early in 2002. With Mourinho's stock boosted by his success at unfashionable Leiria – whom he had taken to third in the table – he was widely tipped to be on his way back to the Stadium of Light.

But once again, Benfica snubbed him, choosing to give the job to Toni's assistant, Jesualdo Ferreira. Soon afterwards, Mourinho got the call from Porto president Pinto da Costa to take over from the sacked Octavio Machado. "To be the coach of FC Porto is a fantastic opportunity," says Mourinho. "However, it is also a great responsibility and one to which I try to respond positively. This is a club that demands success, and that's why I'm here.

"Our good form and our position at the top of the League reflect the hard work we have put in and the quality of the squad. We are in a strong position but we can't ease up now. I wouldn't say our rivals are playing badly, it's just that we are performing far better. We are going out to win every match, we are maturing as a group.

"We could play Real Madrid and Barcelona and win. I'm not claiming we're unbeatable. But on a given day, we have the quality to win anywhere."

Such talk may be somewhat premature; only next season in the Champions League will Mourinho's Porto undergo the ultimate test of their mettle.

But they certainly have travelled well in the UEFA Cup this season, overcoming Polonia Warsaw, Austria Wien, Lens of France and the Turks of Denizlispor en route to the last eight.

Mourinho can be satisfied with every part of his team. The a defence is well led by Jorge Costa – back in Porto after being forced on loan to Charlton Athletic last season following a row with Machado. In midfield, the likes of Costinha, Maniche, Dmitri Alenichev and Tiago provide a good blend of industry and dynamism. Up front, Mourinho has an abundance of options: fast-improving young homegrown striker Helder Postiga, Lithuanian Edgaras Jankauskas, Brazilian goalgetter Derlei and wide players such as Nuno Capucho and the promising Cesar Peixoto.

Even so, there is only one star of the Porto show and that is Deco. Whether creating or scoring goals, wrong-footing defenders with his magician's touch on the ball and change of pace, or curling home one of his trademark free-kicks, the 25-year-old seems a certainty to be voted the country's Player of the Year.

"Deco is a truly world-class player," says Mourinho. "Not only does he produce great individual brilliance; he offers so much more to the team. He is a superb passer and has a competitive personality. He will naturally tackle and chase back for the good of the team."

Brazil's deep reservoir of talented attacking midfielders meant Deco never had a look in for the *Selecao*. However, he will not have to worry any more about being deprived of international football.

Last month he was granted Portuguese citizenship and Portugal boss Luiz Felipe Scolari – who, of course, is also Brazilian – has made it plain he will select him.

Deco's new passport has not met with the approval of all in the Portuguese game; Milan and Portugal midfielder Rui Costa is just one to express his reservations. Too late now, though. Deco is expected to make his debut for Portugal on March 29, ironically in a friendly against Brazil.

● *For more on the UEFA Cup quarter-finalists, see World Service.*

Home comforts...but Porto will be in a new Das Antas next season

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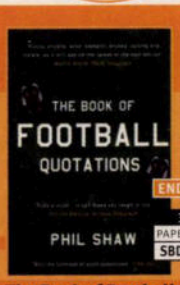

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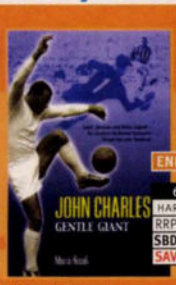

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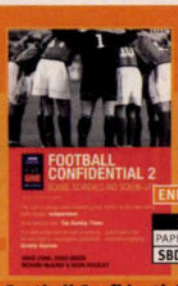

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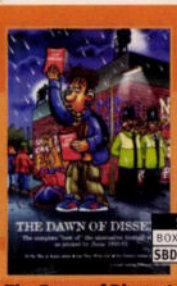

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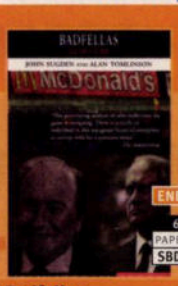

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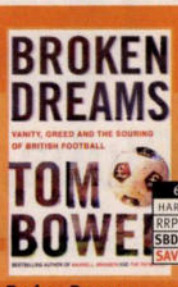

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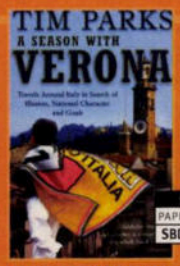

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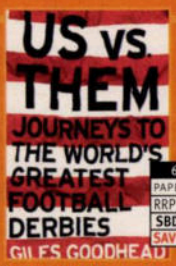

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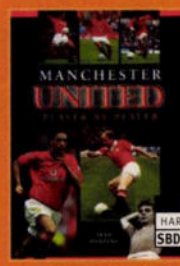

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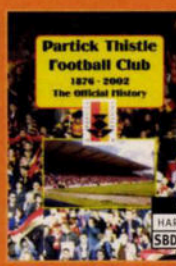

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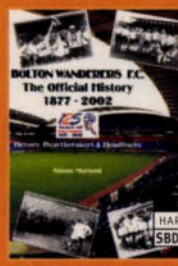

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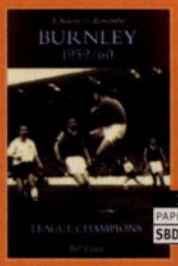

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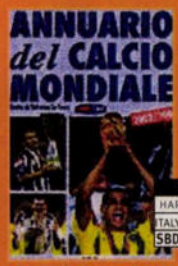

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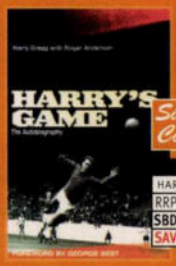

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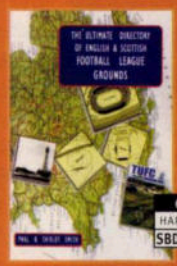

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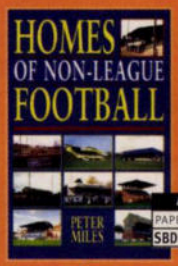

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Keir Radnedge
COMMENTARY

Clubs, countries and common sense

A co-ordinated calendar needs concessions from all parties

Mission impossible...Platini has found a unified calendar will not work

THE UNIFIED international calendar is not working the way it was supposed to. Who says so? Michel Platini, for one. He should know. He was entrusted with creating what was proposed as the magic spell to end years of club v country feuding.

Platini went to work in the autumn of 1998 after being installed as counsellor to Sepp Blatter, the (then) new FIFA president. Blatter said: "If we can ensure national teams around the world are all playing at the same time then the problems of the clubs will disappear. If we can also persuade the leagues to reduce to, say, 18 clubs in the top division then everyone will have time to play their matches and rest properly in between."

Fine words, fine promises. But impossible to achieve.

Platini spent years happily extolling his views on this, that and the other while he transmogrified from superstar player to national coach to World Cup organising figurehead. Now he has found, like so many vapid columnists whose only concept of responsibility is deciding which cereal to choose for breakfast, the world is full of real problems that cannot be talked aside.

He says: "When we started work on the calendar we wanted to harmonise everything – international competitions, club competitions, down to domestic competitions – but then I found so many obstacles we had to restrict the work to 'only' national teams.

"I thought we could impose a season starting in January and ending in November. But it proved impossible. For example, the Italians don't want to play in August because of the industrial holidays and the English have a tradition of a heavy programme around Christmas and New Year. So we decided to leave the national associations to organise their domestic fixtures the way it suited them."

Battle-weary, Platini adds: "We've been talking about fixture lists since I was playing 25 years ago. I'm a little tired of the endless discussion. I am all in favour of a balanced calendar with 18 clubs as a maximum in a top division.

"But then, there are other pressures. A player like Zidane will always play more matches than a player from Sedan or Guingamp. Teams knocked out of the cups will complain they don't have enough games, and those that reach the closing stages will complain they play too much. It's impossible to keep everyone happy."

It certainly is while FIFA, whingeing on the one hand about too much fixture pressure on players, maintains nonsense events such as the Confederations Cup and World Club Championship. One of the most hilarious sights recently was of Chuck Blazer, the CONCACAF general secretary and a FIFA executive member, threatening to pull his confederation out of the unified calendar if European clubs did not come on board for the World Club Championship concept.

Sorry, Chuck, but that was an empty threat. European clubs don't even know that the unified calendar exists. All they see are the likes of Brazil and Argentina taking the mickey by dragging players halfway around the world and back for friendly matches – and in some cases not even giving the players the respect of at least half a match-worth of action.

Not that non-European countries have been alone in flouting the spirit of the unified calendar. Less than a year after its launch in January 2001, Platini's own federation, France, summoned its scattered forces from around Western Europe for a midweek friendly in Australia.

So much for Blatter's prediction that "if we can ensure national teams around the world are all playing at the same time then the problems of the clubs will disappear".

The problem will never disappear, says Johan Cruyff, who thinks fiddling around with calendars is a waste of time. "The answer is in the clubs' own hands," says the Dutchman. "Of course they can sign players from Brazil and Argentina. But they will always be called for inconvenient matches because that's the South American culture. The clubs should just take care not to sign so many players from one country that they depend too heavily on them."

Common sense – a rare commodity, indeed, in this debate.

Batteux and Milos – greats from a dear, departed era

"THE lamps are going out all over Europe" – Sir Edward Grey's haunting words sprang to mind when I learned of the death of Albert Batteux so soon after the departure of Milos Milutinovic.

These were two of the giants of the formative era of the European Cup, now the Champions League. It's a sign of the years moving inexorably on. Other heroes of the era have left us over the past year including Juan Schiaffino and Julinho.

Milutinovic was elder brother of Bora, of World Cup managerial fame. Milos was the better footballer, a robust, courageous centre-forward who came within an inch of knocking Real Madrid out of the first European Cup while in the service of Partizan Belgrade. The Yugoslavs lost 4-0 in Madrid but were winning 3-0 in the Belgrade snow. Milutinovic shot for goal but the ball stuck in the goal-line slush and Madrid survived to win the first of five European Cups.

In both the first Final and the fourth they beat Reims of France, coached by Batteux, who later replicated his domestic success at the champagne club with Saint-Etienne. Batteux famously reassured his star pupil, Raymond Kopa, about the value of his dribbling talents, telling him: "Raymond, if you do NOT go on playing like that I shall drop you."

Milutinovic and Batteux were heroes of a game played, watching those old flickering film clips, in black and white.

Champagne days...Albert Batteux shaped the fortunes of Reims and Saint-Etienne

Billy Wright, who died of cancer nine years ago, was another giant of the era and one whose memory has been admiringly hailed in Norman Giller's *A Hero For All Seasons* (Robson). Younger readers can gain a fascinating insight into a very different game and era by dipping into what is, in effect, a family scrapbook.

Wright was notable in having been twice the subject of television's *This Is Your Life*, once for the BBC and then again for ITV, when I helped co-ordinate the special guest appearance of Lev Yashin, the greatest of Russian goalkeepers... and long since, of course, another member of that era's dear departed.

No end to Belgian debt crisis

Happier times...Mechelen hoist the Cup-winners Cup in 1988

ALL sorts of confusion is accompanying Belgian football's attempt to resolve its clubs' financial problems before everyone else (barring Anderlecht and Club Brugge) go the way of the 1975 champions, RWDM.

That was a real shooting star story. In 1973 RWDM emerged from the fusion of no fewer than three clubs – Racing, White Star and Daring Molenbeek. The intention was to create a Brussels super-club to rival Anderlecht. RWDM even pinched one of Anderlecht's old heroes, Paul Van Himst, to inspire that sole League title win. Brussels has room, however, for only one big club, and Anderlecht refused to share their pre-eminence.

RWDM vanished last year amid financial chaos. A resurrection attempt, under the new identity of FC Brussels, is being bogged down by legal and municipal problems.

It's a different story at Mechelen. The former European Cup-winners Cup holders collapsed into administration last autumn with no option but to release all their players. Yet they play on in the top division thanks to the loan of 10 players during the transfer window from Anderlecht, Standard, Mouscron and Lokeren – who all even continue to foot the wage bill.

Not everyone thinks this is good for the image of the game. League chief executive Jean-Marie Philips says: "What will people think if Mechelen, with five players on loan from Standard and being paid by Standard, win against Standard later this season in Liege? What if that result denies Standard a place in the UEFA Cup next season? Where's the credibility in that?

"On the other hand, what if Standard beat Mechelen thanks to a mistake by the goalkeeper they sent there on loan. What if that win gets Standard into Europe? What will the other European hopefuls, St Truiden, Lokeren and Lierse, think – never mind the fans?"

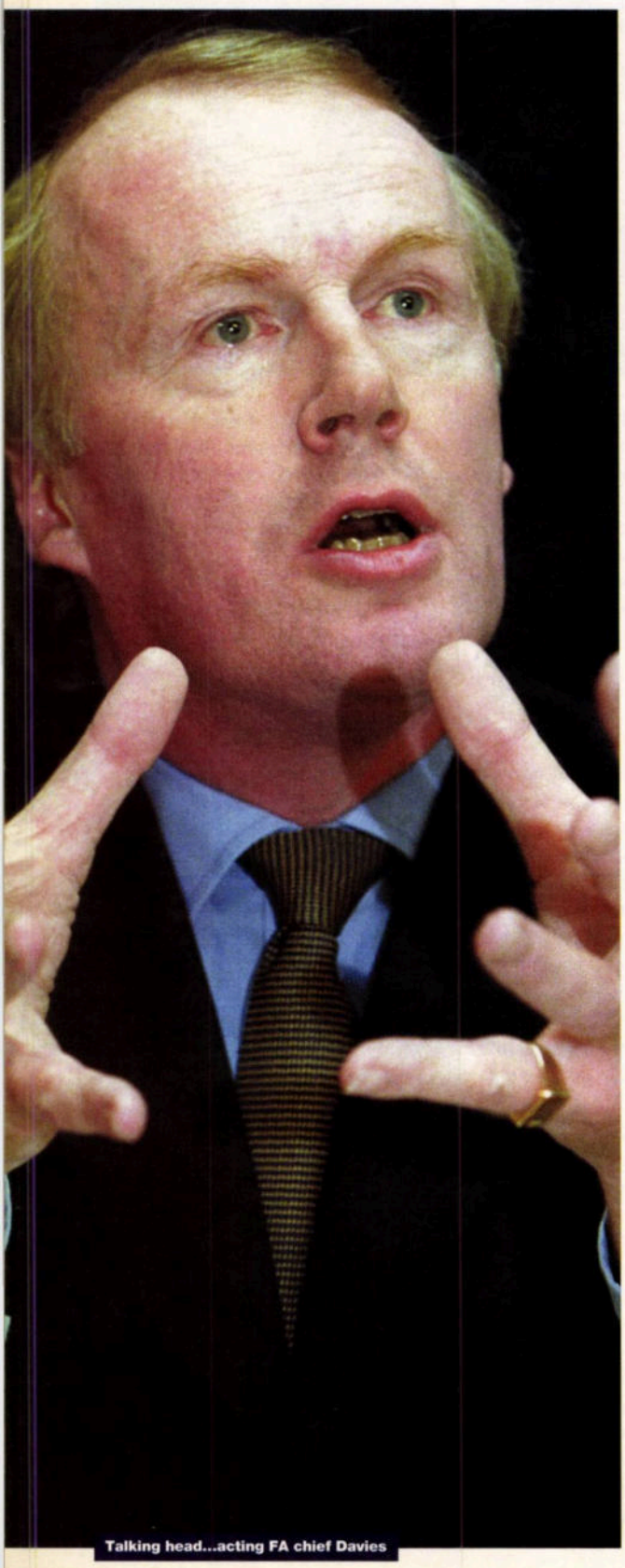
No wonder the top Belgian clubs, having failed to progress with the Atlantic League project, have turned back to the concept of a league merger with Holland. Anderlecht, Brugge, champions Genk, Standard and Gent have opened exploratory talks with leading Dutch clubs for a 'BeNe-Liga'.

The Dutch, to be fair, have their doubts. After all, they don't want to be dragged down to, say, Mechelen's level.

...and English FA debts are nothing to shout about

IT DEPENDS which paper you read how deep in debt the English FA is sunk. *The Guardian* talked about £50million, the *Mail on Sunday* rising £70m and the *Daily Mail* £100m. If it weren't so serious it would almost be funny recalling Adam Crozier, then the FA's chief executive, hectoring Sepp Blatter about the state of FIFA's finances at the world body's Congress in Seoul last year.

Soho Square survivor



Talking head...acting FA chief Davies

World Soccer exclusive: David Davies, the English FA's acting chief executive, talks to Keir Radnedge

WHEN David Davies swapped a career in broadcasting for a career at the Football Association it's a fair bet that many fans did not really notice much difference. He had 'merely' swapped one presenting role for another. It was just that, instead of popping up on BBC news bulletins, he was standing up in a smart suit overseeing the FA Cup draw or shadowing an England manager.

But that is the simplistic guide to the rise and rise of David Davies. He had arrived at the FA at the start of 1994. Since then, six England managers have come and gone, as have two chief executives. Davies was appointed director of communications under Graham Kelly and stepped up and sideways to become executive director ahead of Adam Crozier's new-broom arrival.

Now Crozier has also moved on, and Davies has been left once more, in tandem with legal director Nic Coward, to hold the ship steady pending the arrival of another new captain. Hence his overriding talent might be described as one for survival – and that is no mean skill amid the political complexities involved in administering the national game in England.

WORLD SOCCER: Is it a major problem that the FA's 'real' work is masked by the narrow image projected through the media?

DAVID DAVIES: Other than the government and the monarchy, more column inches are written about the FA and the sport we love than any other organisation in the land. But it's so much more than the England team and today's controversy, whatever that may be. When people play in the park they are playing on facilities probably financed by the FA. They play within our rules and regulations. The FA's responsibility for men and women's football, the boys' and girls' game from grass roots to – hopefully, one day – the World Cup Final is enormous and quite humbling. You have to be pretty resilient to work here. But, equally, we have changed the organisation, transformed it. When I came here the criticism was all about the old farts, that sort of thing. Now the image has changed, and while people are still complaining about the FA, only now they complain about different things.

And those people are not just in the Premier League are they?

Of course not. What matters to most people is whether they can play on Saturday morning and then watch their team on a Saturday afternoon. What I love best is the first day of the season, listening to those phone-ins when everyone's going to be promoted. No one ever comes on and says their team are going to have a hopeless season. But by [the evening phone-in] 6-0-6 it's all changed. That's what working in the middle of it is like.

When did the Crozier reformation begin?

The FA reform process began immediately after Graham Kelly left on December 16, 1998. In 1999 we set up the [managing] board with myself, Nic Coward and Michael Cunnah – who is now leading the Wembley project. We said from the outset that we saw our job as making change unstoppable. People said, for example, that decision-making took too long, so we set up the board to deal with business and commercial affairs. None of us were then candidates to succeed Graham Kelly either because we knew that to transform the FA we needed a new style of leadership, someone from outside. Adam's achievements are self-evident. Our priorities now are not just running the governing body of English football but building the best stadium in the world and taking forward the National Football Centre, which is a fantastic project.

Ideally, the FA would be organised differently, I suppose?

Yes, the Premier League was formed in 1992-93 but the Football League and the FA go back to the 19th century. If you were starting from scratch again you wouldn't organise the game that way. But I remember, in my early days at the BBC in Manchester, taking endless car journeys through monsoons to see [Alan] Hardaker of the League in Lytham about his latest row with the FA. The idea that turbulence is a modern-day phenomenon is far-fetched.

Isn't it a problem that the FA has a wide-ranging remit but the Premier

Wall of opposition...Davies is keen to put the FA's case to the clubs

League chairmen, who are increasingly powerful, have only a narrow focus?
I would say the chairmen I've talked to understand the issues full well – and if they don't then it's because we aren't making a good enough job of explaining them. That's crucial as our responsibility is to maintain relationships with all the key players.

Isn't the culture clash between Premier League and FA best illustrated by the club v country conflict?
Our responsibility at the FA is to tell the clubs that England is their team as well as ours, that the FA Cup is their competition as well as ours. I don't believe these are just fine words; I really believe all football in England benefits from a successful national team and I can also quantify why England should go on playing friendlies. Sven Goran Eriksson needs to experiment with players. We lost to Australia but the positives were seeing the younger players in the second half. Do people honestly think we should never play non-European teams other than in the World Cup finals? Do people not want to watch Brazil play here, or Argentina, or Korea, Japan or the Africans – matches which our players need to experience different styles of football? We understand the pressures on the clubs and their players, but playing friendly matches is in the interest of the whole of our game. The FA is a non-profit-making organisation so the money we make goes to both the professional and the non-professional game. So a successful England team and FA Cup are of interest to both the clubs and the whole of our football. Maybe we have to make a better job of explaining all that.

Trouble is, the clubs all think the FA is awash with money. Isn't that one reason behind demands for the FA to contribute to players' wages when on England duty?
I understand that debate and we have to engage in it but we do have to point out that if we pay money out then, as a non-profit organisation, it has to come from somewhere else. And before you ask about the expenditure associated with Soho Square, we have removed 26 per cent of the running costs since we took over in late November. So we are addressing the key issues given the new financial environment.

'Do people honestly think England should never play non-European teams other than in the World Cup finals? Our players need to experience different styles of football'

But weren't detailed costings, forecasts etc undertaken before work on the new projects began?
Yes, of course, but circumstances change in the real world. Remember, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to go to Parliament a few months ago and admit that even his economic forecasts hadn't worked out.

So what about football forecasts and club v country?
I have been to see Arsene Wenger, Sir Alex Ferguson, Gerard Houllier, Sir Bobby Robson and Terry Venables. They've all agreed to attend a get-together shortly with Sven, with the Premier League chairman Dave Richards, and John Barnwell from the managers' association, to discuss this club v country issue. It's the first time in my nine years that such a gathering has taken place. They didn't need any persuading. We think we know what pressures they're under, but maybe they don't realise the pressures at this end. Last year, Adam announced that – to help the clubs – England wouldn't play on the friendly date in April 2003. But France, Spain, Germany, Turkey and the rest are playing. As things stand the only players who will be training with their clubs will be our lot. That's an anomaly.

What's the rest of the case for friendlies?
Say England chose not to play friendlies for whatever reason – I can tell you that 203 other countries would be playing. The point is, we are part of a world football community. Many countries look to us to take a lead on world issues. We have invested a lot of time and effort in recent years improving our profile around the world. We have a particular strategy. At the top level we have a certain number of countries with whom we are building special relationships. Not just traditional countries but new ones. Australia's one obvious one and then in May we're going to South Africa at the invitation of Nelson Mandela.

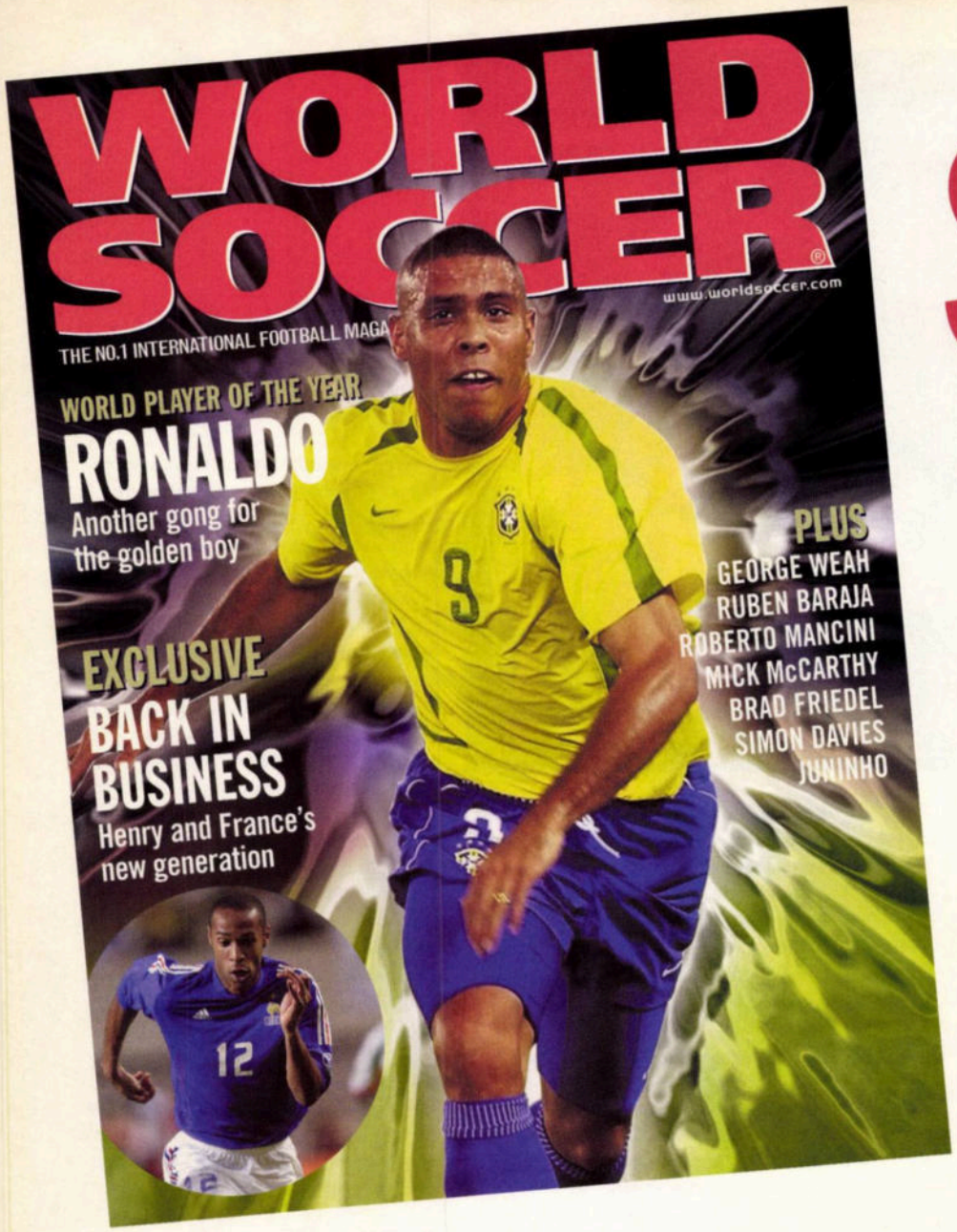
Other countries?
We do recognise our responsibility towards the development of football in less developed countries. We are running courses for coaches, referees, marketing, administration and so on. We are probably one of the most active in the Meridien project linking Africa and Europe. We had a coaching trip out to Afghanistan recently which was quite well publicised. All these things are important.

So England has once again picked up its original role as football missionary?
Yes, I'm proud of the work that's been done taking our message and expertise round the world. It does help now to have the chairman as a vice-president of UEFA. He's travelled extensively in Eastern Europe recently because we've recognised there's a huge well of resentment about what they perceive as a lack of representation.

The FA took a battering about coming out for Issa Hayatou just before last year's FIFA election. Wasn't that a strange decision?
Our decision to support Hayatou would have come out one way or another. We came out in advance with our support for Sepp Blatter in 1998, which was controversial at the time. It's difficult for us to be anything other than transparent.

How does the FA stand with FIFA now?
We are rebuilding our relationship with FIFA and are fortunate in having very good individual relationships with key people there. David Will [the British vice-president] keeps us *au fait* with everything, and we were very encouraged by the support for the British vice-presidency from the executive. There is a greater understanding abroad of what we are seeking to do and what we can do.

So no more insularity from the FA?
Certainly not. We must not get lost in our domestic issues all the time. Football is a world game and we have to live up to our responsibilities – in every way.



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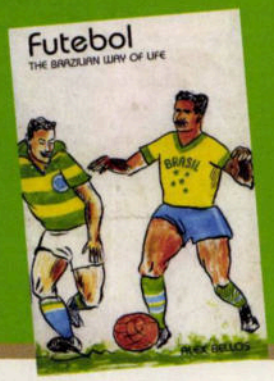

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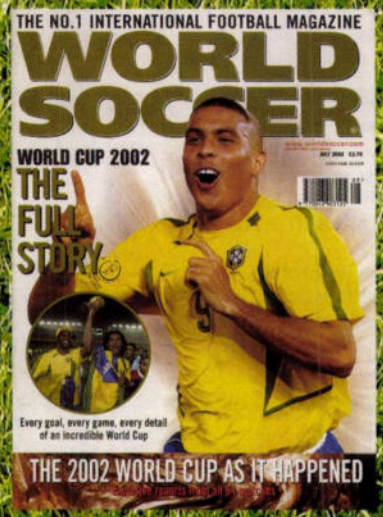

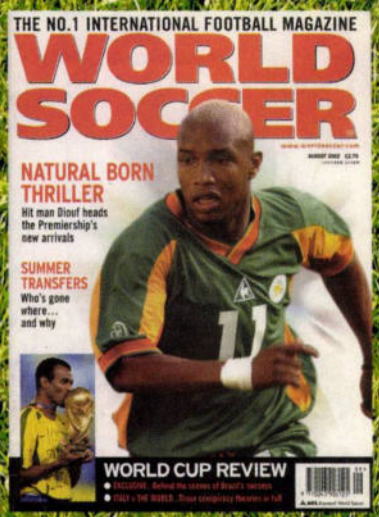

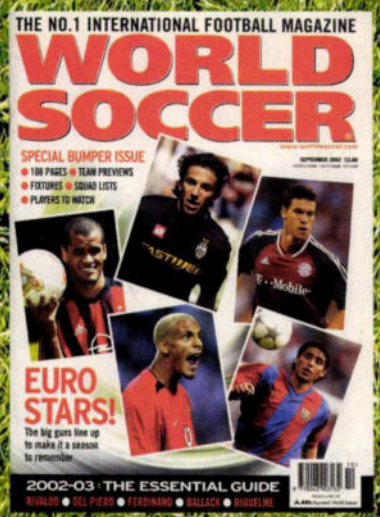

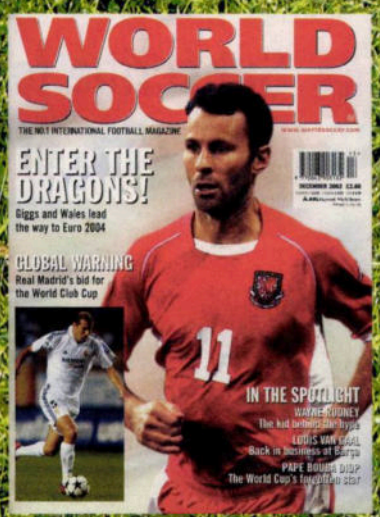

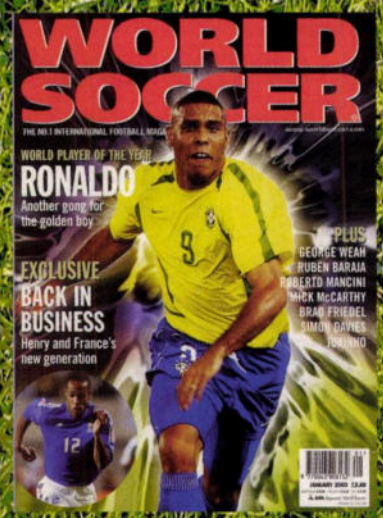

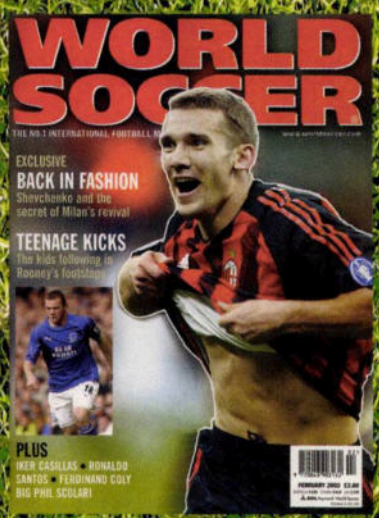

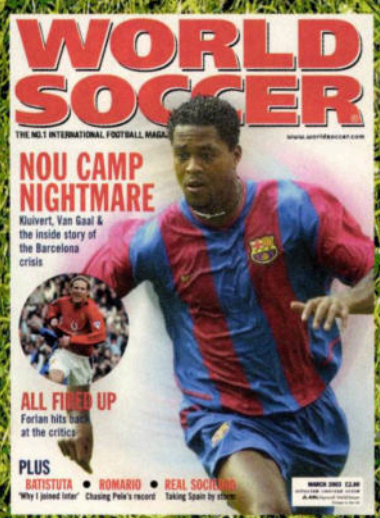

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Cancelled

...until further notice

The World Under-20 tournament is called off as FIFA bows to security concerns relating to impending war in Iraq

THE World Youth Cup, which was cancelled by FIFA amid growing concerns over impending war in Iraq and its possible effect on the surrounding region, may now not take place until this autumn.

The FIFA executive took its decision 19 days before the championship for Under-20s was due to kick off in the United Arab Emirates on March 25. However, no new date was set. Many European clubs would prefer the tournament to now take place in the summer, when FIFA is already organising the Confederations Cup in France. An autumn date is more realistic.

The UAE will remain the host for a rescheduled tournament, despite suggestions that Japan could act as substitute hosts.

"FIFA regrets having to make this decision," said president Sepp Blatter. "But it must take into account its responsibilities towards the players, officials, media and spectators."

Up until the day before the executive meeting in Zurich, FIFA officials were insisting that the tournament would go ahead as planned, while the UAE organisers insisted on continuing with their marketing campaign. This included an advert in a section of this issue of *World Soccer* that went to press before the FIFA executive decision.

Even though the UAE is 600 miles from Iraq, a number of countries had expressed reservations about competing. "We applaud the FIFA decision and look forward to competing in the event when it is rescheduled," said US federation president Bob Contiguglia.

"We understand that safety for the team is more important than a soccer tournament, and this is a situation that warrants caution," added Thomas Rongen, coach of the US Under-20 side.

The American reaction was echoed by the Canadians, whose coach, Dale Mitchell, said:

Shut out...the gates remain closed at Dubai's Al-Maktoum stadium (top), a venue for the postponed World Youth Cup

"We are disappointed because we have been preparing for the tournament for some time. With the events going on, it's understandable that it has been deemed unsafe for us. We respect the decision."

As *World Soccer* went to press, it was unclear whether countries would be seeking compensation from FIFA.

Maldini versus De Boer for European record

FRANK DE BOER will keep his nose ahead of Paolo Maldini in the race for a European club competition appearance record as Barcelona and Milan carry their Champions League bids through to the last two matchdays of the second group phase.

De Boer played his 117th match in Barcelona's goalless draw away to Internazionale – the fourth round of the second phase – while Maldini, the previous day, racked up game No 114 in Milan's 1-0 win at Lokomotiv Moscow.

The man they are seeking to leave behind is former Internazionale defender Giuseppe Bergomi, who played 117 European games between 1980 and 1999.

Barcelona led the way in **Group A** despite that draw in Milan, which brought to an end their record European run of 11 consecutive victories. The Catalans needed only one more point from their two remaining group games to be sure of a place in the last eight. New coach Radomir Antic was content enough with the point against Inter – indeed, happy enough with anything he can get as he concentrates, with some success, on boosting Barcelona's woeful recent domestic form.

Newcastle maintained their hopes of a place in the quarter-finals with a home and away thrashing of Bayer Leverkusen, who sacked last season's hero coach Klaus Toppmoller on the eve of the first match.

Caretaker coach Thomas Horster, a former international defender, brought no instant solutions. Newcastle triumphed 3-1 in both games, despite being without the suspended Alan Shearer and Craig Bellamy for the first tie, in Leverkusen. Shearer was available for the return and saw off the Germans with his first Champions League hat-trick, which included his first Champions League goal from open play.

Roma, without a point from the first three games, threw **Group B** wide open with a shock 3-0 win away to Valencia. Skipper Francesco Totti, match-winning hero in the first phase against Real in Madrid, enjoyed the Spanish air again as he headed Roma in front against the run of play after 24 minutes. He scored a second six minutes later when converting a low cross from Cafu.

Emerson Ferreira completed the rout, giving Roma an insurmountable 3-0 half-time lead with a goal in the 36th minute, to lift some of the pressure that had been building up on coach Fabio Capello after their dismal form in Serie A.

Roma were helped back into contention for a last-eight place by the deadlock between Ajax and Arsenal. They drew 1-1 at Highbury and then 0-0 in Amsterdam, where Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger was critical of the Dutch side's lack of ambition. The fact that Ajax thus prevented Arsenal using their pace on the break may have had something to do with Wenger's irritation.

Milan, after four typically Italian 1-0 wins in a row – two over Lokomotiv – became certain quarter-final qualifiers from **Group C**, while European champions Real Madrid picked up points in the nick of time to maintain a grip on the crown. The Spaniards sneaked a narrow 2-1 home win over Borussia Dortmund and then snatched a 1-1 draw in the Westfalenstadion courtesy of a first-kick, last-minute equaliser from substitute Javier Portillo. No Dortmund player was more distraught at the final whistle than Jan Koller, who scored fine goals in both games against Madrid.

In **Group D**, Manchester United were also certain qualifiers, making it through to the quarter-finals for a record seventh time since the Champions Cup was transformed into the Champions League. United flattened Juventus twice in a week, winning 2-1 at Old Trafford and then 3-0 in Turin, where Juve tarnished Italian clubs' reputation for disciplined defending.

Ryan Giggs was United's hero in the Stadio delle Alpi, putting his side ahead in the 15th minute after being played in by Juan Sebastian Veron. Giggs intercepted a misplaced pass in midfield to run on for his second goal just before half-time, while Ruud Van Nistelrooy completed the rout midway through the second half after another Juve mistake.

Afterwards, the Italians' coach, Marcello Lippi, blamed himself for bringing back some of his first-teamers too soon after a flu bug had swept through the squad. Juve remained hopeful of qualifying for the quarter-finals, however, after Deportivo La Coruna split victories away and home with Basle, who continued to surprise.

Keir Radnedge

'Juventus tarnished Italian clubs' reputation for disciplined defending during their 3-0 home defeat by Manchester United'

Keep counting...Paolo Maldini (right) made his 114th European club appearance away to Lokomotiv Moscow

Pause for thaw...Dejan Stankovic and Lazio eventually beat Wisla after the second leg had been delayed due to a frozen pitch

UEFA CUP

Liverpool still aiming for cup double

ANOTHER UEFA Cup-League Cup double remains on the cards for Liverpool as they beat Manchester United 2-0 in Cardiff to win the English trophy just three days after advancing to the European competition's quarter-finals.

Liverpool ran out 3-0 aggregate winners over Auxerre, the last French survivors in Europe this season, to stay on course to repeat their cup successes of 2001.

Their victory set up an all-British quarter-final against Scottish champions Celtic, who came through impressively, 5-4 on aggregate, against Stuttgart.

Liverpool beat Celtic in the 1997-98 UEFA Cup, but Martin O'Neill's side will probably be more confident this time round after having already seen off English opposition, Blackburn, in this season's competition. The manner of their win over Stuttgart will also be a fillip. Celtic hit back at home in the first leg from going a goal down to win 3-1, punishing the defensive indiscipline that led to Stuttgart's Brazilian defender Jose Marcello Bordon being sent off early in the first half. The Scots maintained their pace in the away leg as well, early goals from Alan Thompson and Chris Sutton putting the tie beyond doubt. Stuttgart battled back to win 3-2 on the night but it was Celtic who progressed.

All German hopes were ended when Hertha Berlin also lost, on the away goals rule, to Portugal's Boavista. Hertha won 3-2 at home, but an 85th-minute header from Avalos brought Boavista victory back in Oporto. The Portuguese now face Malaga, the lone Spanish survivors, who had Manu to thank for the only goal of their tie against AEK Athens.

Greek football now relies on Panathinaikos, who dismissed Anderlecht 3-2 on aggregate but probably expected an easier time of it in Brussels after cruising to a 3-0 home win in the first leg. However, a couple of second-half goals from Nenad Jestrovic set up a tense finale.

'Liverpool's victory over Auxerre set up an all-British quarter-final against Celtic, who came through impressively against Stuttgart'

Panathinaikos now meet Portuguese League leaders FC Porto, who had few problems, thrashing Denizlispor of Turkey 6-1 at home before a 2-2 draw away.

Turkish football is represented in the last eight, however, after Besiktas recorded a dramatic victory over Slavia Prague. The Czechs won 1-0 at home, but Besiktas hit back to go 4-0 ahead in Istanbul. However, they then sat back and very nearly paid the price. Slavia pulled back two goals late on and would have edged through on away goals had Karel Pitak's strike from a 30-yard free-kick not been disallowed controversially for offside. Besiktas now face Lazio, who overcame a spirited Wisla Krakow side in a second leg that was delayed by a week because of a frozen pitch in Poland.

Keir Radnedge

INTERNATIONALS

Saturday, February 8

Feb 8 - Miami - friendly
United States 0
Argentina 1 (L Gonzalez 9)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 27,196. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
USA: Howard - Convey, Bocanegra (Ralston 90), Califf, Victorine (Garcia 56), Mastroeni, Beasley, Klein (Cunningham 79), Olsen (Twellman 46), Donovan, Mathis.
Argentina: Saja - Garce, Burdisso, G Milito, L Gonzalez, Battaglia, Guinazu, D'Alessandro, M Gonzalez (Carignano 46), D Milito (C Rodriguez 85), Insua (Romagnoli 76). *Sent off: D'Alessandro 90min.*

Sunday, February 9

Feb 9 - Sibenik - friendly
Croatia 2 (M Maric pen 35, Andric 72)
Macedonia 2 (Sedloski pen 10, Toleski 60)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Zmic (Bos)
Croatia: Pletikosa (Butina 46) - Rezic (Sabolcki 46), Agic, Andric, Tokic, Srna, Smoje (Carevic 79), Karic, Olic (Hrman 60), Mumlek (Balaban 46), M Maric.
Macedonia: J Nikoloski - S Zdravevski (Vajs 46), Sedloski, Vasoski, Hristovski (Batkoski 46), Sumulikoski, Jancevski (Halimi 46), A Mitreski (Kumbev 90), Naumovski (Toleski 51), Grozdanovski (Arslani 82), Baldovaliev (Gligorovski 46).

Feb 9 - Guayaquil - friendly
Ecuador 1 (I Hurtado pen 89)
Estonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Ramos (Ecu)
Ecuador: Cevallos - M Ayovi, Poroso, I Hurtado, Capurro (George 42), E Tenorio, Sanchez (Baldeon 70), Gavica (Chala 72), W Ayovi (Mendez 70), O Tenorio (Calderon 89), Asencio (Mina 46).
Estonia: Kisseljov - Allas, Stepanov, Jaager, Saviauk, M Rooba (Rahn 90), Kristal (Lindpere 90), Reim, Reinumae, Saharov (Hazvistu 74), Zahhovalko (Ustritski 90).

Tuesday, February 11

Feb 11 - Chateauroux, France - friendly
Cameroon 0
Ivory Coast 3 (Guel 37, Drogba 45, Kalou pen 83)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Ennjini (Fra)
Cameroon: Alioum (Kameni 46) - Njanka (Emana 46), Song (Tchato 82), Mettomo, Wome (Atouba 73), Geremi, Foe (Perrier Doumbe 77), Djemba-Djemba, Idrissou (Olembe 46), Job (Bella 46), Eto'o (Goufan 90).
Ivory Coast: Gnanhouan (Yeboah 73) - Toure, C Domoraud (Zoro 73), Dogba, Coulibaly, Guel (Diabate 58), Zokora, Die (G Domoraud 66), Akale (Diallo 58), Drogba (Ba 63), Kalou.

Wednesday, February 12

Feb 12 - Norcia, Italy - friendly
Albania 5 (Bushi 16, Myrtaj 21, 38, Dragusha 53, Pinari 85)
Vietnam 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Nikoluci (Ita)
Albania: Strakosha (Becaj 46) - A Duro, Beqiri, Xhumba (Dede 46), Bellai, Hasi (Pinari 80), Haxhi (Murati 46), Dragusha (Ahmataj 68), Shkembi, Bushi, Myrtaj (Dobi 75).
Vietnam: Pang Hong Sin - Park Hai Nam, Va Pju Cung (Van Piu Po 73), Drang Pju Vang (Vang Pjung 56), Le Quan Vi, Mang Qou Hi, Ban Van Heng, Ho Dang Cung, Le Mang Tung (Le Da Hink 32), Vo Bu Khin, Bo Ngui Kuan.

Feb 12 - Annaba - friendly
Algeria 1 (Belmadi 89)
Belgium 3 (E Mpenza 2, 57, Sonck 7)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Baraket (Tun)
Algeria: Gaouaoui - Zarrabi, Drioueche, Zeghdoud, Aribi, K Ghazi (Belkaid 46), Mansouri, Kraouche (Ammour 57), Saifi (K Ziani 46), Belmadi, Cherrad (Akrour 57).
Belgium: De Vlieger (Herpoel 46) - De Cock, Van Buyten (Thijs 46), Simons, P Van der Heyden, Vanderhaeghe, Englebert, Goor (Soetaers 85), Sonck (M Mpenza 53), Buffel (Martens 82), E Mpenza (Roussel 80).

Feb 12 - St Michael's - friendly
Barbados 3 (Lucas 5, Williams 9, Straker 48)
Martinique 3 (Reyal 6, Girier-Dufournier 55, 71)
HT: 2-1
Barbados: Chase - Parris, Sobers, R Burrowes, Hawkesworth, Goodridge, K Hall, Cox, Lucas, Williams, Straker.
Martinique: Franciette - Duragrin, Sophie, Vaton, Dicanot, Lavril, Bertrand, Girier-Dufournier, J Goron, Reyal, Anin.

**Feb 12 - Larnaca, Cyprus - friendly*
Bulgaria 1 (Jankovic 36)
Hungary 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Theodotou (Cyp)
Bulgaria: Zdravkov - Kishishev, Zagorcic, Pazin, I Petkov, Borimirov, M Petkov, Peev, Jankovic, Todorov, M Petrov.
Hungary: Kiraly - Urban, Dragoner, Gyepes, C Feher, Lisztes, Lipcsei, Dardai, Low, Tokoli, Kenesei.
**Match abandoned at half-time due to poor weather*

Feb 12 - Guangzhou - friendly
China 0
Brazil 0
Att: 80,000. **Ref:** Kim Tae-young (SKo)
China: Liu Yunfei - Zhen Zhi, Li Weifeng, Li Ming, Sun Jihai (Yu Genwei 84), Zhao Junzhe, Li Tie, Yang Pu (Xiao Zambho 69), Li Xiaopeng (Xu Yunlong 67), Qi Hong (Li Jinyu 62), Li Yi (Yang Chen 62).
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Luisao, Anderson Polga, Roberto Carlos, Ze Roberto (Emerson Ferreira 75), Gilberto Silva, Kleberson (Juninho Pernambucano 75), Ronaldinho (Denilson 62), Rivaldo, Ronaldo (Amoroso 46).

Feb 12 - Split - friendly
Croatia 0
Poland 0
Att: 1,000. **Ref:** Wack (Ger)
Croatia: Pletikosa - Tomas, R Kovac, Simunic, Zivkovic (D Simic 46), Srna (Mornar 46), Tudor (J Leko 64), Rosso (Mumlek 87), Babic (Seric 46), T Maric (M Maric 67), Olic.
Poland: Dudek - Baszczynski, J Bak, Glowacki, Stolarczyk, Kaluzny (Radomski 70), Karwan (Dabrowski 56), Kosowski, Swierczewski, Olisadebe, Zurawski (Dawidowski 78).

Feb 12 - Quito - friendly
Ecuador 2 (Baldeon 25, 48)
Estonia 1 (Zahhovalko 68)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Vasco (Ecu)
Ecuador: Cevallos - M Ayovi, I Hurtado, G Espinoza, George, Obregon, E Tenorio (Gavica 63), Mendez, Chala (Castillo), Baldeon (Calderon 80), Mina (Salas 22).
Estonia: Pareiko - Jaager (Allas 46), Rahn (Stepanov 64), Hohlov-Simson, U Rooba, M Rooba, Kristal, Reinumae (Haavistu 46), Terehhov (Oper), Saharov (Zelinski 55), Zahhovalko.

Feb 12 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 1 (A Hassan 20)
Denmark 4 (C Jensen 31, 68, 70, Tomasson 59)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** El-Fatah (Egy)
Egypt: N El-Sayed - A Hassan, El-Tabei, Ramzy, El-Saqqa (Goma'a 88), T El-Sayed, H Said, Abdel Aziz (Gouda 35), Ghali, Emam (Shady Mohamed 71), Hossam. *Sent off: T El-Sayed 29min, Ghali 90min.*
Denmark: Sorensen - Michaelsen (Priske 87), Henriksen, Laursen, N Jensen, Poulsen (Wieghorst 63), Gravesen (Larsen 72), Gronkjaer, Tomasson, C Jensen, Rommedahl (Kristiansen 75).

Feb 12 - London - friendly
England 1 (Jeffers 70)
Australia 3 (Popovic 17, Kewell 42, Emerton 84)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 34,590. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
England: James (Robinson 46) - G Neville (Mills 46), Ferdinand (King 46), Campbell (Brown 46), Ashley Cole (Konchesky 46), Beckham (Murphy 46), Scholes (Jenas 46), Lampard (Hargreaves 46), Dyer (Rooney 46), Beattie (Vassell 46), Owen (Jeffers 46).
Australia: Schwarzer - Neill, Moore, Popovic (T Vidmar 70), Lazaridis, Emerton, Okon (Muscat 87), Skoko (Bresciano 46), Chipperfield (Grella 76), Viduka (Sterjovski 85), Kewell (Aloisi 56).

Feb 12 - Saint-Denis - friendly
France 0
Czech Republic 2 (Grygera 7, Baros 62)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 57,366. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
France: Rame - Thuram, Gallas, Desailly, Lizarazu (Silvestre 75), Makelele (Vieira 46), Petit (Pedretti 75), Wiltord (Pires 46), Zidane, Marlet (Trezeguet 46), Henry (Cisse 68).
Czech Republic: Cech - Grygera, Bolf, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski (Petrous 88), Galasek (Gedeon 72), Rosicky (Dostalek 57), Poborsky (Hubschman 76), Nedved, Smicer (Vachousek 17), Koller (Baros 57; Lokvenc 79).

Feb 12 - Tbilisi - friendly
Georgia 2 (Chaladze 61, Ashvetia 83)
Moldova 2 (Dadu 75, pen 84)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Hovanisyan (Arm)
Georgia: Lomaia (Nikuradze 46) - Abramidze (Kemokidze 63), Shashiashvili, Didava (Menteshashvili 46), Amisulashvili, Sakhvadze, A Gogoberishvili, Aleksidze (Kvaratskhelia 46), Jikia (Daraselia 46), Mujiri (Chaladze 46), Apkhazava (Ashvetia 46).
Moldova: Bogdan - Covalenco, Rebeja (Priganiuc 63), Pusca, Catinsus, Cebotari (Golban 73), Covalciuc, Olexic, Frunza (Patula 63), Ivanov (Boret 68), Clescenco (Dadu 63).

Feb 12 - Heraklion - friendly
Greece 1 (Kyrgiakos 25)
Norway 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Greece: Nikopolidis - Goumas, Dabizas, Kyrgiakos (Vallas 59), Lakis (Giannakopoulos 46), Zagorakis, Basinas, Fissas, Tsartas (Georgiadis 46), Nikolaidis (Haristeas 46), Vryzas (Venetidis 76).
Norway: Olsen - Basma, Lundekvam, R Johnsen (Hangeland 46), T Hansen (Riseth 46), Rudi (Kah 82), Andersen, Svindal Larsen (Winsnes 82), Riise (Tessem 61), Solskjaer (F Johnsen 46), Rushfeldt.

Feb 12 - Amsterdam - friendly
Holland 1 (Van Bronckhorst 86)
Argentina 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,090. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Holland: Waterreus - Ricksen, Stam (Reiziger 46), F De Boer, Zenden, Seedorf, Van Bommel (Van Bronckhorst 71), Cocu (Bosvelt 81), Davids, Van Nistelrooy (Makaay 46), Kluivert.
Argentina: Cavallero - Quiroga, Ayala, Samuel, Zanetti, Veron (Cambiasso 72), Sorin, Almar, Ortega (Gallardo 63), Claudio Lopez (Solari 81), G Lopez (Saviola 59).

Feb 12 - Tel Aviv - friendly
Israel 2 (Nimni 19, Zandberg 61)
Armenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000
Israel: Awat (Eilmelech 57) - Harazi (Zano 46), Ben-Haim (Afek 90), Benado (Gershon 46), Badir (Alberman 57), Keisi (Antebi 46), Zandberg (Dago 74), Abuksis (Biton 46), Nimni (Tal 43), Revivo (Luz 79), Benayoun (Holtzman 74).
Armenia: Ambartsumyan - Bilibio, K Dokhoyan, Artur Mkrtchyan (Partsikyan 77), Vardanyan, R Hachatryan, Petrosyan, Voskanyan, Artavazd Karamian, Shakhgeldyan (V Hakopyan 68), Arman Karamian.

Feb 12 - Genoa - friendly
Italy 1 (Corradi 62)
Portugal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 31,265. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Italy: Toldo (Buffon 46) - Panucci, Nesta, Cannavaro (Legrottaglie 76), Zambrotta, Camoranesi (Fiore 81), Zanetti (Ambrosini 59), Perrotta, Delvecchio (Birindelli 59), Miccoli, Corradi (F Inzaghi 72).
Portugal: Ricardo - Ricardo Rocha (Luis Loureiro 46), Fernando Meira, Fernando Couto (Jorge Andrade 83), Sergio Conceicao (Paulo Ferreira 46), Tiago (Helder Postiga 71), Rui Costa (Pedro Mendes 62), Nuno Valente (Rui Jorge 78), Figo, Simao (Boa Morte 62), Pauleta (Miguel 79).

Feb 12 - Kingston - friendly
Jamaica 1 (Lowe 52)
United States 2 (Bocanegra 11, Klein 12)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Bowen (Cay)
Jamaica: A Lawrence - C Davis (Francis 76), Goodison, Marshall, Ziadie, Scarlett (Crawford 76), Daley (Johnson 73), Gardner (Taylor 89), Whitmore, Burton (A Williams 82), Lowe.
USA: Howard - Bocanegra, Garcia, Califf, Cherundolo, Mastroeni, Beasley (Vagenas 83), Klein (Ralston 46), Convey, Donovan (Cunningham 79), Mathis.

Feb 12 - Antalya, Turkey - friendly
Latvia 2 (Rubins 31, Miholaps 58)
Lithuania 1 (Blagonadezdins og 34)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 700
Latvia: Kolinko - Blagonadezdins, Isakovs, Igor N Stepanovs, Zirnis, Laizans (Lobanev 79), Astafjevs, Bleidelis (Pucinsks 75), Rubins (Kolesnicenko 86), Verpakovskis (Miholaps 46; Dobrecovs 84), Prohorenkovs (Stolcers 58).
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Dedura, Dziaukstas, Gieveckas, Skarbalius, Semberas (Slavickas 82), R Zutautas (Joksas 77), Mikalajunas, Fomenka (Radzinevicius 77), Razanauskas, Jankauskas.

Feb 12 - Tripoli - friendly
Libya 2 (Al-Taied pen 27, pen 59)
Canada 4 (McKenna 18, Brennan 34, Stalteri 47, Canizalez 81)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 45,000
Canada: Hirschfeld (Onstad 46) - Fletcher, Fenwick, De Vos, Hastings, Brennan (Pozniak 88), Stalteri, Imhof (Klukowski 60), Hutchinson, McKenna (Friend 86), Hume (Canizalez 65).

Feb 12 - Toulon, France - friendly
Mali 1 (Doukantie 20)
Guinea 0
HT: 1-0

Feb 12 - Valletta - friendly
Malta 2 (Bogdanovic 15, Nwoko 61)
Kazakhstan 2 (Zhumaskaliyev 72, Tarasov 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Rogalla (Swi)
Malta: Darmanin - Ciantar, Vella, Carabott, Said, Dimech, Bogdanovic, Mamo (Camenzuli 76), Mallia (Holland 88), Brincat (Turner 58), Nwoko (A Mifsud 67).
Kazakhstan: Novikov - Avdeyev, Musin, Artenov, Kozyulin (Kichshenko 64), Lovchev, Shevchenko, Karpovits (Bogomolov 46), Litvinenko (Garkusha 46), Tarasov, Zhumaskaliyev.

Feb 12 - Phoenix, USA - friendly
Mexico 0
Colombia 0
Att: 28,764. **Ref:** Valenzuela (USA)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Altamirano (Castro 73), D Davino, Marquez, Carmona, Lopez (Juan P Rodriguez 62), Pardo, L Perez, Luna (R Morales 46), C Bianco (Rergis 71), Borgetti (Olalde 46).
Colombia: O Cordoba - Martinez, Yepes, I Cordoba, Bedoya (Cortes 80), Grisales (Ortiz 46), Viveros (A Ramirez 46), Hernandez (Preciado 76), I Restrepo, Angel, Ferreira (Castillo 46).

Feb 12 - Paris, France - friendly
Morocco 1 (Saber 64)
Senegal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Piccirillo (Fra)
Morocco: El-Jarmouni - Ouaddou, Naybet (Fahmi 80), El-Karkouri, Saber, Samir, Kaissi (Brazi 88), Yacoubi, Hdioued, Zairi (Bidoudane 90), Baha (Aboucharouane 88).
Senegal: Sylva - Coly (Tall 46), Diawara, P M Diop, I N'Diaye, Diouf (Diaw 65), Diao, A Faye (Sylvain N'Diaye 46), Fadiga (Makhtar N'Diaye 46), H Camara (Diabang 65), Kamara.

Feb 12 - Belfast - friendly
Northern Ireland 0
Finland 1 (Hyypia 49)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,137. **Ref:** McDonald (Sco)
N Ireland: Taylor (Carroll 46) - A Hughes, Kennedy, Williams, McCartney (Craigan 66), Lomas, Gillespie, Johnson, Healy, Quinn (Kirk 59), McVeigh (Elliott 77).
Finland: Jaaskelainen - Saarinen (Kuivasto 90), Hyypia (Heikkinen 70), Tihinen, Hietanen, Nurmela, Riihilahti, Valakari, Kolkka (Kopteff 75), Vayrynen (Johansson 60), Forssell (Kuqi 46).

Feb 12 - Glasgow - friendly
Scotland 0
Rep Ireland 2 (Kilbane 9, Morrison 17)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 33,337. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
Scotland: Sullivan (Gallacher 46) - Anderson, Caldwell, Dailly, G Alexander, Lambert (Gemmill 46), Ferguson (Cameron 65), Naysmith, McCann (Smith 65), Crawford (Thompson 65), Hutchison (Devlin 46).
Rep Ireland: Kiely (Colgan 81) - Carr, Breen (O'Brien 90), O'Shea (Dunne 81), Harte, Reid (Carsley 78), Kinsella (Healy 78), Holland, Kilbane, Doherty (Connolly 74), Morrison.

Feb 12 - Podgorica - EC qual
Serbia-Montenegro 2 (Mijatovic pen 34, Lazetic 52)
Azerbaijan 2 (G Gurbanov 59, 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Granat (Pol)
Serbia-Montenegro: Jevric - N Djordjevic, M Dudic, Bunjevcevic, Lazetic (Markovic 75), D Stankovic, Vukic, Boskovic, Mijatovic (Ljuboja 71), Kezman (Duljaj 60), Milosevic.
Azerbaijan: Gasanzade - Sadygov, K Guliev, Emin Guliev, Akhmedov, R Mamedov, M Gurbanov (F Mamedov 90), Imamaliyev, S Aliyev (K Mamedov 87), Ismailov (R Musaev 55), G Gurbanov.

Feb 12 - Nova Gorica - friendly
Slovenia 1 (Rakovic 79)
Switzerland 5 (H Yakin 3, Haas 29, Frei 36, 78, Cabanas 49)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 3,500. **Ref:** Abraham (Hun)

Slovenia: Simeunovic (Dabanovic 46) - Knavs, Bulajic, Cesar, Acimovic (Zlogar 72), Zahovic, Sukalo (Gajser 60), Pavlin, N Ceh, Siljak, Cimirotic (Rakovic 67).
Switzerland: Zuberbuhler - Haas, P Muller, Henchoz (Keller 74), Berner (Meyer 46), Cabanas, Vogel (Celestini 46), Wicky (Cantaluppi 76), H Yakin, Frei, Chapuisat (Thurre 67).

Feb 12 - Palma de Mallorca - friendly
Spain 3 (Raul 31, pen 76, Guti 82)
Germany 1 (Bobic 38)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Spain: Casillas (Canizares 84) - Michel Salgado, Puyol, Cesar (ivan Helguera 46), Aranzabal, Joaquin (Etxeberria 69), Albelda, Baraja (Xavi 74), Vicente, Raul (Jose Mari 84), Diego Tristan (Guti 74).
Germany: Kahn - Friedrich, Worns, Metzelder, Rau (Baumann 51; Balitsch 62), Schneider (Freier 74), Ramelow, Jeremies, Bohme, Bobic (Lauth 59), Klose (Neuville 83).

Feb 12 - Rades - friendly
Tunisia 1 (Braham 49)
Sweden 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Haimoudi (Alg)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Jaidi, Badra, Clayton (Ayari 66), Melki (Jedidi 78), Nafti, Benachour, Bouazizi (Mnari 46), Mhadhebi (Jaziri 46; Hammi 90), Braham (Missaoui 73).
Sweden: Hedman - Gustavsson, Mellberg, Michael Svensson, Edman, A Svensson, Lantz, Anders Andersson (Allback 70), Kallstrom (Alexandersson 70), Andreas Andersson, Prica.

Feb 12 - Izmir - friendly
Turkey 0
Ukraine 0
Att: 40,000. **Ref:** Attard (Mlt)
Turkey: Rustu - Fatih Akyel (Abdullah 85), Alpay, Bulent (Deniz 46), Tayfun (Umit Davala 46), Tumer (Ahmet 35), Tugay (Okan 85), Basturk (Arif 78), Ibrahim Uzulmez (Ergun 46), Ilhan (Mustafa 77), Nihat (Fatih Tekke 77).
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi (Shutkov 46) - Starostyak (Radchenko 63), Fedorov (Kalinichenko 88), Tymoshchuk (Konovalov 81), Nesmachnyi, Dmytrulin (Skrypnyk 72), Husin (Popov 82), Voronin (Rotan 82), Serebrennikov (Zubov 46), Rebrov, Shevchenko (Kormiltsev 88).

Feb 12 - Cardiff - friendly
Wales 2 (Earnshaw 8, Hartson 74)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Baljic 5, Barbarez 64)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Malcolm (NI)
Wales: Ward (Crossley 46) - Weston (M Jones 61), Melville, Page, Speed, Davies, Savage (Oster 88), Pembridge, Bellamy, Earnshaw (Koumas 77), Hartson (Taylor 82).
Bosnia: Hasagic - Berberovic, Konjic, Hibic, Music, Beslija, Grujic (Mulina 78), Barbarez (Miskovic 81), Biscevic (Velagic 90), Bolic (Halilovic 89), Baljic (Hrgovic 78).

Friday, February 14

Feb 14 - Split, Croatia - friendly
Macedonia 0
Poland 3 (Niedzielan 27, Rasiak 38, Lasocki 44)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Trivkovic (Cro)
Macedonia: J Nikoloski - Batkoski (Gligorovski 86), Sedloski, Kumbev (Jancevski 46), Arslani (Vajs 46), Grozdanovski (Hristovski 46), A Mitreski, Halimi (Meglenski 76), Masev (S Zdravevski 46), Naumoski, Baldovaliev (Toleski 46).
Poland: Szamotulski (Liberda 46) - Wasilewski, Bieniuk (Kowalczyk 46), Zielinski (Stasiak 80), Sznaucner, Dawidowski (Madej 76), Lasocki (Burkhardt 46), Majewski (Mazurkiewicz 69), Kaczorowski (Mila 46), Niedzielan, Rasiak.

Saturday, February 15

Feb 15 - Cotonou - friendly
Benin 1 (Gaspoz 17)
Ghana 0
HT: 1-0

Sunday, February 16

Feb 16 - Wuhan - friendly
China 1 (Li Weifeng 67)
Estonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000
China: Liu Yunfei (Yu W. 46) - Li Xiaopeng, Du Ping (Li Ming 46), Zhao Junzhe, Li Jy. (Li Yi 46), Zhy. N. (Qu Shengqing 65), Zhen Zhi, Li Weifeng, Wei X., Xiao Zambho (Qi Hong 46), Yang Pu.
Estonia: Kisseljov - Allas, Stepanov, Hohlov-Simson, Rahn (Reinumae 87), Haavistu (Reim 65), Kristal (Ustritski 87), M Rooba, Terehhov (Saharov 74), Zelinski, Zahhovaiko.

Feb 16 - Banjul - friendly
Gambia 0
Nigeria 1 (Ugochukwu 10)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000

Saturday, February 22

Feb 22 - Antananarivo - Cosafa CC 1st rnd
Madagascar 2
Mauritius 1

Feb 22 - Blantyre - friendly
Malawi 1
DR Congo 1

Sunday, February 23

Feb 23 - Lilongwe - friendly
Malawi 2
DR Congo 3

Feb 23 - Lima - friendly
Peru 5 (Jose Soto pen 13, 82, Serrano 19, Jorge Soto 26, Farfan 84)
Haiti 1 (Menelas 50)
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Rivera (Per)
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Villalta, Jose Soto, Moisela (Salas), Jayo, Del Solar, Zegarra, Quinteros (Carmona), Farfan (Mosto), Serrano (Sotil).
Haiti: Augustin - Desir, Gilles (Mentor), Germain, Dorcelus (Saint-Cyr), Cesar, J-J Pierre, Romulus (Guillaume), Michel (Boucicaut), G Pierre, Menelas.

Tuesday, March 4

Mar 4 - Singapore - friendly
Singapore 4 (Baksin, Sahdan, Fadhil, Juraimi)
Maldives 1 (Umar)
HT: 3-1

Wednesday, March 5

Mar 5 - Tel Aviv - friendly
Israel 0
Moldova 0
Att: 8,000. **Ref:** Bertini (Ita)
Israel: Strauber (Elimelech 46) - Harazi (Zano 46), Antebi (Keisi 56), Benado, Ben-Haim, Alberman (Biton 65), Banin (Abuksis 65), Dago (Badir 75), Holtzman, Abargil (Afek 75), Tal (Luz 87).
Moldova: Hmaruc - Andriuta, Testimitanu, Olexic, Pusca, Cebotari, Boret (Dadu 90), Priganiuc, Frunza (Golban 46), Ivanov, Clescenco (Patula 60).

GOLD CUP 2003 QUALIFIERS

CENTRAL AMERICAN ZONE (UNCAF Cup)

In Panama City

Feb 9
Panama 1 (Diaz 34)
El Salvador 2 (Galdamez 70, Corrales 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Pineda (Hnd)
Panama: James - Walter, Vergara, A Torres, Mendez, Solis (Cubillas 67), Gomez, Tunon, Diaz (Mendieta 76), Justavino (Ceballos 59), Julio Dely Valdes.
El Salvador: Gomez - Torres, Gonzalez, V Velasquez, Pacheco, Amaya del Cid, Ochoa (Campos 70), Murgas, Galdamez, Alas (Padilla 46), Corrales (Menjivar 90).

Feb 11
Nicaragua 0
Honduras 2 (Jairo Martinez 4, De Leon 20)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Aguilar (EIS)
Nicaragua: Chamorro - Vallecillo, Quintanilla, Alonso, Gaston, M Acevedo, D Solorzano, Reyes (Webster 62), Calero (West 77), Andino (Palacios 27), Rocha.
Honduras: Coello - Cruz, R Morales, Alvarez, Jose Emil Martinez, De Leon (M Suazo 80), Mendoza, Andino, F Pavon (W Martinez 87), Jairo Martinez (Gutierrez 65), S Martinez.

Feb 11
El Salvador 0
Costa Rica 1 (Scott 62)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
El Salvador: Gomez - Ochoa, Marvin Gonzalez, V Velasquez, Torres (Alas 63), Menjivar (D Mejia 70), Amaya del Cid (Lopez 64), Pacheco, Murgas, Galdamez, Corrales.
Costa Rica: R Gonzalez - L Gonzalez, Marin, Drummond, Wallace (M Alpizar 26), R Cordero (Vallejos 67), Centeno, Bryce, C Castro, Herron (Scott 46), R Fonseca.

Feb 13
El Salvador 3 (Corrales 5, V Velasquez 27, D Mejia 89)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
El Salvador: Gomez (L Castro 44) - J Castro, Marvin Gonzalez, V Velasquez, Fuentes (Amaya del Cid 62), Carballo, Murgas, Menjivar, Campos (D Mejia 32), Alas, Corrales. *Sent off: Carballo 67min.*
Nicaragua: Tellez - Vallecillo (Webster 71), Quintanilla, Alonso, Olivas (Aviles 39), M Acevedo, West, D Solorzano, Palacios, T Acevedo (Calero 55), Rocha.

Feb 13
Costa Rica 1 (Centeno pen 24)
Guatemala 1 (Garcia 48)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ramos Rizo (Mex)
Costa Rica: Mesen - Bennett (Vallejos 52), Marin, L Gonzalez, C Castro (Chinchilla 62), Drummond, R Cordero, Bryce, Centeno (A Solis 73), R Fonseca, Scott. *Sent off: R Cordero 44min.*
Guatemala: Trigueno - Morales, Melgar, Chen, Jimenez, Benitez (Rodriguez 46), Garcia, Ramirez, Thompson, Ruiz, Acevedo.

Feb 15
Costa Rica 1 (Scott 16)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Aguilar (EIS)
Costa Rica: R Gonzalez - Chinchilla, L Gonzalez (C Castro 56), Marin, Drummond, M Alpizar, Vallejos, Centeno (Bennett 72), Bryce, Scott, R Fonseca (A Alpizar 51).
Nicaragua: Chamorro - Aviles, Jerez, Gaston, Alonso, Ruiz, Andino (M Acevedo 46), D Solorzano, T Acevedo, West (Calero 69), Webster (Rocha 46).

Feb 15
Honduras 0
El Salvador 1 (Murgas 81)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
Honduras: Coello - Cruz, R Morales, Alvarez, De Leon (Andino 73), Mendoza, M Suazo, Figueroa (Jose Emil Martinez 67), Guevara, D Suazo, Jairo Martinez (Nunez 60).
El Salvador: Gomez - Torres (D Mejia 80), J Castro, Marvin Gonzalez, V Velasquez, Pacheco, Menjivar, Murgas, Alas, Lopez (Escobar 88), Corrales (Ochoa 89).

Feb 16
Guatemala 0
Panama 2 (Mendez 29, Brown 36)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Pineda (Hnd)
Guatemala: Trigueno - Morales, Melgar (Figueroa 83), Chen, Jimenez, Benitez (Rodriguez 40), Acevedo, Garcia, Ramirez (Romero 77), Thompson, Ruiz.
Panama: James - Anthony, Vergera, Walter, Gomez (Solis 16), Mendez, Cubilla, Tello, Diaz (Solanilla 67), Justavino (Ramos 82), Brown. *Sent off: Solanilla 79min, Walter 90min.*

Feb 18
Guatemala 5 (Ruiz 33, 45, 66, Garcia 77, Figueroa 81)
Nicaragua 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Guatemala: Trigueno - Martinez, Melgar, Morales, Chen, Romero, Thompson, C Alegria (Figueroa 54), Ramirez, Garcia (Albizuris 85), Ruiz. *Sent off: Ramirez 39min.*
Nicaragua: Chamorro - Aviles (Palacios 46), Quintanilla (Webster 63), Jerez, Alonso, Olivas (Moreno 35), M Acevedo, D Solorzano, Vallecillo, West, Rocha.

Feb 18
Panama 1 (Mendieta 60)
Honduras 1 (Jairo Martinez 28)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ramos Rizo (Mex)
Panama: James - Cubillas, Anthony, Ramos, Mendez, Tunon (Canales 46), Mendieta (Ceballos 86), Diaz, Tello, Brown, Justavino.
Honduras: Coello - Alvarez, R Morales, Mendoza, Figueroa, Andino, Guevara, De Leon, Jose Emil Martinez (F Pavon 80), D Suazo, Jairo Martinez (Nunez 69).

Feb 20
El Salvador 0
Guatemala 2 (C Alegria 18, Garcia pen 63)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ramos Rizo (Mex)
El Salvador: Gomez - J Castro (Torres 77), Marvin Gonzalez, V Velasquez, Pacheco, Menjivar (Galdamez 55), Murgas, D Mejia (Amaya del Cid 55), Alas, Lopez, Corrales.
Guatemala: Trigueno - Jimenez, Melgar, Morales, Chen, Figueroa (Albizuris 88), Thompson, Acevedo (Rodriguez 80), Garcia, C Alegria (Martinez 53), Romero. *Sent off: Thompson 89min.*

Feb 20
Costa Rica 1 (Bryce 45)
Honduras 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
Costa Rica: Mesen - L Gonzalez, Chinchilla, Drummond, Vallejos (R Cordero 70), Bennett, C Castro, Centeno (D Fonseca 80), Bryce, Herron (A Alpizar 54), R Fonseca.
Honduras: Coello - R Morales, Alvarez, Cruz, De Leon (Nunez 69), Mendoza, M Suazo, Guevara, F Pavon (Jose Emil Martinez 46), Cacho (Andino 46), Jairo Martinez.

Feb 21
Panama 0
Nicaragua 1 (Palacios 83)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Aguilar (EIS)
Panama: James - A Torres, Solanilla, Walter (Canales 32), Cubilla, Mendez, Tello, Justavino, Diaz, Brown (Ceballos 46), Mendieta (Solis 55). *Sent off: Solis 75min.*
Nicaragua: Chamorro - Quintanilla, Gaston, Alonso, Aviles, Andino (D Solorzano 49), Ruiz, Olivas (Palacios 72), M Acevedo, West (Webster 83), Rocha.

Feb 23
Guatemala 2 (Ramirez 7, Figueroa 56)
Honduras 1 (Guevara 75)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ramos Rizo (Mex)
Guatemala: Trigueno - Morales, Jimenez, Melgar, Martinez, Figueroa (Albizuris 78), Chen, Romero, Ramirez (Benitez 88), Ruiz, Acevedo (Rodriguez 46).
Honduras: Escobar - Mendoza, Cruz, Andino (F Pavon 46), Jose Emil Martinez, R Morales, M Suazo, Guevara, Alvarez, De Leon (Jairo Martinez 54), Nunez (Cacho 63).

Feb 23
Panama 0
Costa Rica 1 (A Solis 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
Panama: James - A Torres, Solanilla (Tunon 89), Walter, Cubilla, Mendez, Canales, Diaz (Vergara 72), Tello, Ramos (Ceballos 77), Justavino.
Costa Rica: Mesen - Drummond, Marin, C Castro, L Gonzalez, R Cordero (D Fonseca 46), M Alpizar (A Solis 53), Bennett, Chinchilla, Bryce, Scott (A Alpizar 75).

CENTRAL AMERICAN QUALS - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Costa Rica	5	4	1	0	5	1	13
Guatemala	5	3	1	1	10	4	10
El Salvador	5	3	0	2	6	4	9
Honduras*	5	1	1	3	4	5	4
Panama	5	1	1	3	4	5	4
Nicaragua	5	1	0	4	1	11	3

**Honduras finished fourth on toss of coin*

Top three qualify for the 12-nation Gold Cup finals, to be held in the United States from July 12 to 27. Fourth-placed side enters three-team play-off tournament (along with the two Caribbean Zone final qualifying pool runners-up), from which the top two also qualify for the finals. Past Gold Cup winners Canada, Mexico and United States qualify for finals automatically. The winners of the two Caribbean Zone final qualifying pools (to be played in late March) will also qualify, along with two guest nations, Brazil and Colombia.

CYPRUS FOUR-NATION TOURNAMENT

Feb 12 - Limassol - semi-final
Cyprus 0
Russia 1 (Khokhlov 43)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Efthimiadis (Gre)
Cyprus: N Panayiotou - Konnafis, Theodotou, Georgiou, N Nicolaou (Spyrou 15), Ioakim, M Nicolaou, Tomic (Konstantinos 75), Okkas (Satsias 59), Yasoumi (G Constantinou 83), M Constantinou.
Russia: Chizhov (Mandrykin 46) - Onopko, Nizhegorodov, Evsikov, Karpin (Gusev 63), Smertin, Khokhlov (Aldonin 46), Loskov (Berezutsky 88), Solomatin, Sychev (Kerzhakov 46), Beschastnykh (Kirichenko 46; Karyaka 75).

Feb 12 - Larnaca - semi-final
Romania 2 (D Munteanu 39, Ganea 41)
Slovakia 1 (Vittek 6)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 150. **Ref:** Papaioannou (Gre)
Romania: Lobont - Contra (Tamas 90), Filipescu (Iencsi 68), Chivu, Rat, Stoica, Radoi (Grigorie 82), D Munteanu, Pancu, Ganea (Moldovan 59), Mutu (Bratu 90).
Slovakia: Bucek - Hlinka (Kratochvil 63), Dzurik, Klimpl, Pinte (Kisel 63), Karhan (Mintal 75), M Petras, Michalik, Leitner (Kozlej 83), Bencik (Reiter 64), Vittek.

Third-place play-off

Feb 13 - Larnaca
Cyprus 1 (Rauffmann 39)
Slovakia 3 (Reiter 1, Vittek 62, 82)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 250
Cyprus: Simitras - N Nicolaou (G Nicolaou), Satsias (Theodotou), Germanou, Daskalakis, Eleftheriou (G Constantinou), Spyrou, Neofytou, Charalambides, M Constantinou, Rauffmann.
Slovakia: Konig - Hanek, P Vavrik (B Labant 46), Dzurik, Kisel, Mintal, Hlinka, Drobnak (Strba 46), Eduard Hrncar (Pinte 75), Reiter (Vittek 52), Kozlej.

Final

Feb 13 - Limassol
Russia 4 (Soavu og 31, Karyaka 35, Arshavin 42, Gusev 59)
Romania 2 (Tamash 13, Grigore pen 71)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 500. **Ref:** Loizou (Cyp)
Russia: Ovchinnikov - Nizhegorodov, Berezutsky, Aldonin, Evsikov, Kusov (Yanovsky 72), Karyaka, Gusev, Solomatin, Arshavin (Loskov 60), Kerzhakov (Kirichenko 46).
Romania: Vintile - Danchu, Radou, Tamash (Opritse 67), Iencsi, Soavu, Grigore, Ghioane (Rat 81), Bratu (Ogararu 67), Petre (Silvashan 46), V Munteanu (Kristia 46).

KING'S CUP

In Bangkok, Thailand

Feb 16
Thailand 2 (Surayuth 26, Datsakom 54)
North Korea 2 (Myong Song-chol 53, Kim Myong-won 86)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000

Feb 16
Sweden 3 (Elmander 16, 24, Skoog 82)
Qatar 2 (Abdulrahman 63, Al-Enazi pen 90)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Hanlumyaung (Tha)
Sweden: Isaksson - Ulander, Majstorovic, T Jonsson, Dorsin, M Nilsson, Johannesson, A Johansson (C Andersson 82), A Farnerud (Ishizaki 68), Skoog, Elmander (Grahn 86).

Feb 18
Sweden 1 (Skoog 21)
North Korea 1 (Pak Yong-chol 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Rungklay (Tha)
Sweden: Gustafsson - Marek, P Nilsson, Lundqvist, C Andersson, Wilhelmsson (A Johansson 65), Ishizaki (Johannesson 86), Lindstrom, Bakircioglu, Skoog (Elmander 46), Grahn.

Feb 18
Thailand 1 (Therdsak pen 52)
Qatar 1 (Al-Enazi 86)
HT: 0-0

Feb 20
Thailand 1 (Norongchai 80)
Sweden 4 (Thanongsak og 47, Elmander 63, A Farnerud 66, Majstorovic 69)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Lee Gui-young (NKo)
Sweden: Isaksson - Lundqvist, Majstorovic, T Jonsson, Dorsin, A Farnerud, M Nilsson (Ishizaki 77), Johannesson (Ulander 77), Bakircioglu (Lindstrom 80), A Johansson, Elmander.

Feb 20
North Korea 2
Qatar 2
HT: 2-1
Sent off: Hong Yong-Jo (North Korea); Al-Kathiri (Qatar)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sweden	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
North Korea	3	0	3	0	5	5	3
Qatar	3	0	2	1	5	6	2
Thailand	3	0	2	1	4	7	2

Top two qualified for Final

Third-place play-off

Feb 22
Thailand 3
Qatar 1
HT: 2-0

Final

Feb 22
Sweden 4 (Skoog 3, 77, Grahn 26, Johannesson 56)
North Korea 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Kunsuta (Tha)
Sweden: Gustafsson - Ulander (Lundqvist 71), P Nilsson, Majstorovic, C Andersson, Johannesson, Ishizaki (Wilhelmsson 27), M Nilsson, Lindstrom, Grahn, Skoog (A Farnerud 81).

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

PRELIMINARY GROUP

In Hong Kong

Feb 22
Macao 2 (Che Chi Man pen, Chan Man Hei)
Mongolia 0
HT: 1-0

Feb 22
Hong Kong 2 (Kwok Yue-hung, Lee Wai-man)
Taiwan 0
HT: 0-0

Feb 24
Mongolia 2 (Tugsbayar, Lumbengarav)
Guam 0
HT: 0-0

Feb 24
Hong Kong 3 (Lee Kin-won pen, Au Wai-lun 2)
Macao 0
HT: 0-0

Feb 26
Mongolia 0
Taiwan 4 (Huang Che-ming 2, Chiang Shih-lu, Yang Cheng-hsing pen)
HT: 0-1

Feb 26
Guam 0
Macao 2 (De Sousa 2)
HT: 0-1

Feb 28
Hong Kong 10
Mongolia 0
HT: 7-0

Feb 28
Guam 0
Taiwan 7
HT: 0-2

Mar 2
Hong Kong 11 (Lau Chi-keung 3, Chan Ho-man 3, Au Wai-lun 2, Chan Chi-hong, Poon Yiu-cheuk, Lee Wai-man)
Guam 0
HT: 5-0

Mar 2
Taiwan 2 (Wu Chun-I, Huang Che-ming)
Macao 1 (Hoi Man-Io)
HT: 1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hong Kong	4	4	0	0	26	0	12
Taiwan	4	3	0	1	13	3	9
Macao	4	2	0	2	5	5	6
Mongolia	4	1	0	3	2	16	3
Guam	4	0	0	4	0	22	0

Hong Kong qualify for finals tournament, to be staged in Japan in May. Japan, China and South Korea qualified automatically

CONFEDERATIONS CUP

In France

SCHEDULE

Group A

18.06.03 .....New Zealand v Japan (Saint-Denis)
18.06.03 .....France v Colombia (Lyon)
20.06.03 .....Colombia v New Zealand (Lyon)
20.06.03 .....France v Japan (Saint-Etienne)
22.06.03 .....France v New Zealand (Saint-Denis)
22.06.03 .....Japan v Colombia (Saint-Etienne)

Group B

19.06.03 .....Turkey v United States (Saint-Etienne)
19.06.03 .....Brazil v Cameroon (Saint-Denis)
21.06.03 .....Cameroon v Turkey (Saint-Denis)
21.06.03 .....Brazil v United States (Lyon)
23.06.03 .....Brazil v Turkey (Saint-Etienne)
23.06.03 .....United States v Cameroon (Lyon)

Semi-finals

26.06.03 .....Group B 1st v Group A 2nd (Lyon)
26.06.03 .....Group A 1st v Group B 2nd (Saint-Denis)

Third-place play-off

28.06.03 .....(Saint-Etienne)

Final

29.06.03 .....(Saint-Denis)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 1

Angola, Malawi, Nigeria

08.09.02 .....Angola-Nigeria 0-0
12.10.02 .....Malawi-Angola 1-0
29.03.03 .....Malawi-Nigeria
07.06.03 .....Nigeria-Malawi
21.06.03 .....Nigeria-Angola
04.07.03 .....Angola-Malawi
Djibouti withdrew

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malawi	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Nigeria	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Angola	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Group 2

Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Niger

07.09.02 .....Niger-Ethiopia 3-1
08.09.02 .....Guinea-Liberia 3-0
12.10.02 .....Liberia-Niger 1-0
13.10.02 .....Ethiopia-Guinea 1-0
29.03.03 .....Ethiopia-Liberia
30.03.03 .....Guinea-Niger
08.06.03 .....Liberia-Ethiopia
08.06.03 .....Niger-Guinea
21.06.03 .....Ethiopia-Niger
22.06.03 .....Liberia-Guinea
06.07.03 .....Guinea-Ethiopia
06.07.03 .....Niger-Liberia

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
Niger	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Ethiopia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Liberia	2	1	0	1	1	3	3

Group 3

Benin, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia

08.09.02 .....Benin-Tanzania 4-0
08.09.02 .....Sudan-Zambia 0-1
12.10.02 .....Tanzania-Sudan 1-2
12.10.02 .....Zambia-Benin 1-1
29.03.03 .....Tanzania-Zambia
30.03.03 .....Sudan-Benin
07.06.03 .....Zambia-Tanzania
08.06.03 .....Benin-Sudan
21.06.03 .....Tanzania-Benin
21.06.03 .....Zambia-Sudan
06.07.03 .....Benin-Zambia
06.07.03 .....Sudan-Tanzania

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Benin	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
Zambia	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Sudan	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Tanzania	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

Group 4

Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, Mozambique

08.09.02 .....Congo-Burkina Faso 0-0
09.09.02 .....Central African Rep-Mozambique ...1-1
13.10.02 .....Burkina Faso-Central African Rep...2-1
13.10.02 .....Mozambique-Congo 0-3
30.03.03 .....Congo-Central African Rep
30.03.03 .....Mozambique-Burkina Faso
07.06.03 .....Burkina Faso-Mozambique
08.06.03 .....Central African Rep-Congo
21.06.03 .....Burkina Faso-Congo
22.06.03 .....Mozambique-Central African Rep
06.07.03 .....Central African Rep-Burkina Faso
06.07.03 .....Congo-Mozambique

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo	2	1	1	0	3	0	4
Burkina Faso	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Cent Af Rep	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Mozambique	2	0	1	1	1	4	1

Group 5

Cape Verde Islands, Kenya, Mauritania, Togo

06.09.02 .....Mauritania-Cape Verde Islands 0-2
07.09.02 .....Kenya-Togo 3-0
12.10.02 .....Cape Verde Islands-Kenya 0-1
12.10.02 .....Togo-Mauritania 1-0
29.03.03 .....Kenya-Mauritania
30.03.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Togo
06.06.03 .....Mauritania-Kenya
08.06.03 .....Togo-Cape Verde Islands
22.06.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Mauritania
22.06.03 .....Togo-Kenya
04.07.03 .....Mauritania-Togo
05.07.03 .....Kenya-Cape Verde Islands

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kenya	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Cape Verde	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Togo	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Mauritania	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group 6

Eritrea, Mali, Seychelles, Zimbabwe

08.09.02 .....Seychelles-Eritrea 1-0
08.09.02 .....Zimbabwe-Mali 1-0
12.10.02 .....Eritrea-Zimbabwe 0-1
13.10.02 .....Mali-Seychelles 3-0
29.03.03 .....Eritrea-Mali
30.03.03 .....Zimbabwe-Seychelles
07.06.03 .....Seychelles-Zimbabwe
08.06.03 .....Mali-Eritrea
21.06.03 .....Eritrea-Seychelles
22.06.03 .....Mali-Zimbabwe
05.07.03 .....Seychelles-Mali
06.07.03 .....Zimbabwe-Eritrea

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Mali	2	1	0	1	3	1	3
Seychelles	2	1	0	1	1	3	3
Eritrea	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group 7

Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Morocco, Sierra Leone

07.09.02.....Gabon-Morocco.....0-1
08.09.02.....Equatorial Guinea-Sierra Leone.....1-3
12.10.02.....Sierra Leone-Gabon.....2-0
13.10.02.....Morocco-Equatorial Guinea.....5-0
29.03.03.....Sierra Leone-Morocco
30.03.03.....Gabon-Equatorial Guinea
07.06.03.....Morocco-Sierra Leone
08.06.03.....Equatorial Guinea-Gabon
21.06.03.....Morocco-Gabon
21.06.03.....Sierra Leone-Equatorial Guinea
06.07.03.....Equatorial Guinea-Morocco
06.07.03.....Gabon-Sierra Leone

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Sierra Leone	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Gabon	2	0	0	2	0	3	0
Equatorial Guinea	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

Group 8

Gambia, Lesotho, Senegal

08.09.02.....Lesotho-Senegal.....0-1
13.10.02.....Gambia-Lesotho.....6-0
29.03.03.....Gambia-Senegal
08.06.03.....Senegal-Gambia
22.06.03.....Senegal-Lesotho
06.07.03.....Lesotho-Gambia
Sao Tome e Principe withdrew

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gambia	1	1	0	0	6	0	3
Senegal	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Lesotho	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

Group 9

Botswana, DR Congo, Libya, Swaziland

07.09.02.....Botswana-Swaziland.....0-0
08.09.02.....Libya-DR Congo.....3-2
13.10.02.....DR Congo-Botswana.....2-0
13.10.02.....Swaziland-Libya.....2-1
28.03.03.....Libya-Botswana
30.03.03.....Swaziland-DR Congo
08.06.03.....Botswana-Libya
08.06.03.....DR Congo-Swaziland
22.06.03.....DR Congo-Libya
22.06.03.....Swaziland-Botswana
04.07.03.....Libya-Swaziland
06.07.03.....Botswana-DR Congo

GROUP 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swaziland	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
DR Congo	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Libya	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Botswana	2	0	1	1	0	2	1

Group 10

Egypt, Madagascar, Mauritius

07.09.02.....Madagascar-Egypt.....1-0
12.10.02.....Mauritius-Madagascar.....0-1
30.03.03.....Mauritius-Egypt
06.06.03.....Egypt-Mauritius
20.06.03.....Egypt-Madagascar
06.07.03.....Madagascar-Mauritius
Guinea-Bissau withdrew

GROUP 10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Madagascar	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Egypt	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Mauritius	1	0	0	1	0	1	0

Group 11

Burundi, Ivory Coast, South Africa

08.09.02.....Ivory Coast-South Africa.....0-0
13.10.02.....South Africa-Burundi.....2-0
30.03.03.....Burundi-Ivory Coast
08.06.03.....Ivory Coast-Burundi
22.06.03.....South Africa-Ivory Coast
06.07.03.....Burundi-South Africa

GROUP 11

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Africa	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Ivory Coast	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Burundi	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

Group 12

Algeria, Chad, Namibia

07.09.02.....Namibia-Algeria.....0-1
11.10.02.....Algeria-Chad.....4-1
30.03.03.....Chad-Namibia
07.06.03.....Namibia-Chad
20.06.03.....Algeria-Namibia
06.07.03.....Chad-Algeria

GROUP 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Namibia	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Chad	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

Group 13

Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda

07.09.02.....Uganda-Ghana.....1-0
13.10.02.....Ghana-Rwanda.....4-2
30.03.03.....Rwanda-Uganda
07.06.03.....Uganda-Rwanda
22.06.03.....Ghana-Uganda
06.07.03.....Rwanda-Ghana

GROUP 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Uganda	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Rwanda	1	0	0	1	2	4	0

● The 13 group winners qualify for the finals, along with hosts Tunisia and holders Cameroon.
● The 16th finals place will be awarded to the best second-placed finisher from Groups 2 to 9. This will be decided first by the highest number of points, then goal difference, then highest number of goals scored and, if necessary, a play-off.

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

2nd group phase

Group A

February 18

Barcelona (Spa) 3 (Saviola 7, Cocu 29, Kluivert 66)
Internazionale (Ita) 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 82,417. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Barcelona: Bonano - Gabri, Puyol, De Boer, Reiziger - Overmars (Rochemback 71), Xavi, Cocu, Motta (Mendieta 73) - Kluivert, Saviola (Luis Enrique 81).
Inter: Toldo - J Zanetti, Gamarra, Cannavaro, Cordoba - Dalmat, Di Biagio (Okan 59), C Zanetti, Morfeo (Kallon 66) - Recoba, Vieri. *Sent off: Recoba 80min.*

Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 1 (Franca 25)
Newcastle United (Eng) 3 (Ameobi 5, 15, Lua Lua 32)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 22,500. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Leverkusen: Butt - Preuss (Schneider 46), Kleine, Cris (Callsen-Bracker 72), Ojigwe - Balitsch (Kaluzny 79) - Neuville, Simak, Basturk, Brdaric - Franca.
Newcastle: Given - Hughes, O'Brien, Bramble, Bernard - Jenas, Dyer, Speed, Robert - Ameobi (Cort 84), Lua Lua (Chopra 84).

February 26

Internazionale 0
Barcelona 0
Att: 71,740. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Inter: Toldo - J Zanetti, Cannavaro, Gamarra, Pasquale - Guglielminpietro (Sergio Conceicao 78), C Zanetti, Dalmat (Martins 62), Morfeo - Kallon (Di Biagio 34), Vieri.
Barcelona: Bonano - Gabri, Puyol (Andersson 78), De Boer, Reiziger - Rochemback (Riquelme 68), Xavi, Cocu (Mendieta 59), Motta - Kluivert, Saviola.

Newcastle United 3 (Shearer 5, 11, pen 36)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Babic 73)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 40,508. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Newcastle: Given - Griffin, Caldwell, Bramble, Bernard - Kerr (Hugo Viana 82), Dyer (Solano 70), Speed, Robert - Ameobi, Shearer (Lua Lua 81).
Leverkusen: Butt - Preuss, Kleine, Cris (Zivkovic 30), Placente - Ramelow (Babic 46), Kaluzny - Neuville (Brdaric 62), Basturk, Simak - Franca.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Internazionale	4	2	1	1	7	6	7
Newcastle	4	2	0	2	8	9	6
Bayer Leverkusen	4	0	0	4	5	11	0

Tue, March 11
Barcelona v Bayer Leverkusen
Internazionale v Newcastle United

Wed, March 19
Bayer Leverkusen v Internazionale
Newcastle United v Barcelona

Group B

February 18

Arsenal (Eng) 1 (Wiltord 5)
Ajax (Hol) 1 (De Jong 17)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,427. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Arsenal: Seaman (Taylor 46) - Lauren, Campbell, Cygan, Cole - Wiltord, Vieira, Gilberto Silva (Jeffers 72), Pires - Bergkamp (Kanu 84), Henry.
Ajax: Lobont - Trabelsi, Pasanen, Chivu, Van Damme (Witschge 76) - Galasek - De Jong, Pienaar (Yakubu 89), Maxwell - Van der Meyde, Ibrahimovic (Boukhari 78).

Roma (Ita) 0
Valencia (Spa) 1 (Carew 78)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,599. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Roma: Pelizzoli - Zebina, Dellas (Cufre 58), Aldair, Panucci - Cafu, Tommasi, Lima, Guigou - Montella (Cassano 46), Delvecchio (Bombardini 55).
Valencia: Canizares - Reveillere, Ayala, Pellegrino, Carboni - Rufete (Mista 65), Albelda, Baraja, Vicente (Kily Gonzalez 63) - Aimar (Marchena 89) - Carew.

February 26

Ajax 0
Arsenal 0
Att: 51,025. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Ajax: Lobont - Trabelsi, Pasanen, Chivu, Maxwell - Galasek (Yakubu 70) - De Jong, Pienaar (Sneijder 89), Witschge - Van der Meyde - Ibrahimovic (Hossam 83).
Arsenal: Seaman - Lauren, Keown, Campbell, Cole - Wiltord (Parlour 78), Vieira, Gilberto Silva, Pires (Van Bronckhorst 86) - Bergkamp (Jeffers 78), Henry.

Valencia 0
Roma 3 (Totti 24, 30, Emerson 36)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Valencia: Canizares - Reveillere, Ayala, Pellegrino (Carboni 77), Fabio Aurelio - Rufete (Aimar 65), Baraja, Albelda, Vicente (Kily Gonzalez 52) - J Sanchez, Carew.
Roma: Antonioli - Zebina (Cufre 63), Aldair, Samuel, Candela - Cafu, Tommasi, Emerson, Lima - Totti (Fuser 88), Cassano (Guigou 90).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Arsenal	4	1	3	0	4	2	6
Valencia	4	1	2	1	2	4	5
Roma	4	1	0	3	5	6	3

Tue, March 11
Ajax v Valencia
Arsenal v Roma

Wed, March 19
Roma v Ajax
Valencia v Arsenal

Group C

February 19

Milan (Ita) 1 (Tomasson 62)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 72,028. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Milan: Dida - Brocchi (Simic 79), Nesta, Costacurta, Maldini - Gattuso, Pirlo - Rivaldo, Rui Costa (Serginho 62) - Tomasson (Seedorf 67), Inzaghi.
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Nizhegorodov, Ignashevich (Parks 82), Pachinin, Lekgetho - Maminov, Sennikov, Obradovic, Loskov - Buznikin (Izmailov 46), Pimenov.

Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Raul 43, Ronaldo 55)
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 1 (Koller 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Pavon, Roberto Carlos - Flavio Conceicao, Makelele - Figo, Raul, Zidane (Solari 81) - Ronaldo (Guti 74).
Dortmund: Lehmann - Evanilson (Ricken 83), Worns, Metzelder, Dede - Frings, Reuter (Kehl 76) - Rosicky - Ewerthon, Koller, Amoroso (Reina 67).

February 25

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 21)
Real Madrid 1 (Portillo 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,400. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Dortmund: Lehmann - Metzelder, Worns, Madouni, Dede (Amoroso 89) - Evanilson (Ricken 79), Reuter, Kehl - Frings - Koller, Ewerthon (Reina 87).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Pavon (Portillo 89), Roberto Carlos - Flavio Conceicao (Guti 67), Makelele - Figo (Minambres 71), Raul, Zidane - Ronaldo.

Lokomotiv Moscow 0
Milan 1 (Rivaldo pen 33)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 32,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Sennikov, Ignashevich, Nizhegorodov, Evseev - Maminov, Mnguni - Izmailov, Loskov, Sirkhayev (Pimenov 58) - Julio Cesar (Parks 82).
Milan: Dida - Costacurta, Nesta, Maldini, Kaladze - Seedorf, Gattuso, Redondo (Brocchi 75), Serginho (Rui Costa 86) - Inzaghi (Tomasson 84), Rivaldo.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	4	4	0	0	4	0	12
Real Madrid	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
B Dortmund	4	1	1	2	4	5	4
Lokomotiv M	4	0	1	3	3	6	1

Wed, March 12
Borussia Dortmund v Lokomotiv Moscow
Real Madrid v Milan

Tue, March 18
Lokomotiv Moscow v Real Madrid
Milan v Borussia Dortmund

Group D

February 19

Basle (Swi) 1 (H Yakin 30)
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 29,031. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Basle: Zuberbuhler - Haas, M Yakin, Zwyssig, Atouba - Barberis, Cantaluppi, Chipperfield (Duruz 70) - H Yakin (Varela 84) - Gimenez, Rossi (Huggel 52).
Deportivo: Juanmi - Hector, Naybet, Jorge Andrade, Romero - Scaloni, Duscher, Donato (Diego Tristan 46), Sergio (Acuna 82) - Luque (Amavisca 66), Makaay.

Manchester United (Eng) 2 (Brown 3, Van Nistelrooy 85)
Juventus (Ita) 1 (Nedved 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 66,703. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Man Utd: Barthez - G Neville, Ferdinand, Brown, Silvestre (O'Shea 52) - Beckham, Keane, Butt, Giggs (Forlan 89) - Scholes (Solskjaer 79) - Van Nistelrooy.
Juventus: Chimenti - Pessotto, Ferrara, Montero, Zenoni - Tacchinardi, Davids - Camoranesi, Nedved, Zalayeta - Trezeguet (Olivera 65).

February 25

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Diego Tristan 3)
Basle 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Bre (Fra)
Deportivo: Juanmi - Hector, Jorge Andrade, Naybet, Romero - Sergio, Duscher, Scaloni, Fran (Amavisca 59) - Diego Tristan (Valeron 69), Makaay (Luque 79).
Basle: Zuberbuhler - Haas, Quennoz, Zwyssig, Atouba - Barberis (Tum 62), Huggel, Varela (Rossi 57) - H Yakin - Chipperfield, Gimenez.

Juventus 0
Manchester United 3 (Giggs 15, 41, Van Nistelrooy 67)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 59,111. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Ferrara, Montero, Zambrotta (Pessotto 65) - Conte (Tudor 46), Davids - Camoranesi, Nedved, Di Vaio (Salas 46) - Trezeguet.
Man Utd: Barthez - G Neville, Ferdinand, Keane, O'Shea (Pugh 58) - P Neville - Beckham, Butt, Veron, Forlan (Giggs 8; Van Nistelrooy 49) - Solskjaer.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester Utd	4	4	0	0	10	2	12
Juventus	4	1	1	2	7	7	4
Dep La Coruna	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Basle	4	1	0	3	2	8	3

Wed, March 12
Juventus v Deportivo La Coruna
Manchester United v Basle

Tue, March 18
Basle v Juventus
Deportivo La Coruna v Manchester United

UEFA CUP

4th rnd, 1st legs

February 20

Auxerre (Fra) 0
Liverpool (Eng) 1 (Hyypia 73)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)

Celtic (Sco) 3 (Lambert 36, Maloney 44, Petrov 68)
Stuttgart (Ger) 1 (Kuranyi 26)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Sent off: Bordon (Stuttgart) 16min

Hertha Berlin (Ger) 3 (Alex Alves 17, 43, Van Burik 90)
Boavista (Por) 2 (Rui Oscar 37, Goulart 80)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Barber (Eng)

Lazio (Ita) 3 (Lazetic 23, Jop og 44, Chiesa 71)
Wisla Krakow (Pol) 3 (Uche 39, Zurawski pen 50, pen 63)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)

Malaga (Spa) 0
AEK Athens (Gre) 0
Ref: Siric (Cro)

Panathinaikos (Gre) 3 (Olisadebe 12, 73, Limberopoulos 63)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)

FC Porto (Por) 6 (Capucho 48, Derlei 54, Ricardo Costa 65, Jankauskas 69, Deco 73, Alenichev 82)
Denizlispor (Tur) 1 (Kratochvil 78)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)

Slavia Prague (Cze) 1 (T Dosek 62)
Besiktas (Tur) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Sent off: Zago (Besiktas) 84min

4th rnd, 2nd legs

February 27

AEK Athens 0
Malaga 1 (Manu 26)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Styles (Eng)
Malaga 1-0 on agg

Anderlecht 2 (Jestrovic 68, 79)
Panathinaikos 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Sent off: Vokolos 41min, Konstantinidis 82min (both Panathinaikos)
Panathinaikos 3-2 on agg

Besiktas 4 (Pancu 41, Ronaldo 61, Ahmet Dursun 66, Ilhan 70)
Slavia Prague 2 (Dostalek pen 77, Hrdlicka 83)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Messina (Ita)
Besiktas 4-3 on agg

Boavista 1 (Avalos 84)
Hertha Berlin 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Sent off: Dardai (Hertha) 66min; Filipe Anunciacao (Boavista) 80min
Agg 3-3. Boavista on away goals

Denizlispor 2 (Ersen 52, Mustafa Ozkan 58)
FC Porto 2 (Derlei 42, Clayton 84)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)
Porto 8-3 on agg

Liverpool 2 (Owen 66, Murphy 72)
Auxerre 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)
Liverpool 3-0 on agg

Stuttgart 3 (Tiffert 38, Hleb 75, Mutzel 87)
Celtic 2 (Thompson 13, Sutton 16)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Celtic 5-4 on agg

March 5

Wisla Krakow 1 (Kuzba 5)
Lazio 2 (Fernando Couto 20, Chiesa 53)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Dougal (Sco)
Lazio 5-4 on agg

Quarter-finals draw

Celtic v Liverpool
Lazio v Besiktas
Malaga v Boavista
FC Porto v Panathinaikos

1st legs, March 13; 2nd legs, March 20

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 02.03.03

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Christian Vieri	Internazionale (Ita)	21	2	42
2	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	19	2	38
	Roy Makaay	Dep La Coruna (Spa)	19	2	38
4	Andrei Krolov	Tallinna VMK (Est)	37	1	37
5	James Beattie	Southampton (Eng)	18	2	36
	Arman Karamian	Pyunik (Arm)	36	1	36
	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	24	1.5	36
8	Mateja Kezman	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	22	1.5	33
9	Shabani Nonda	Monaco (Fra)	16	2	32
	Pauleta	Bordeaux (Fra)	16	2	32
11	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	15	2	30
	Wesley Sonck	Genk (Blg)	20	1.5	30
13	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	14	2	28
14	Thomas Christiansen	Bochum (Ger)	13	2	26
	Filippo Inzaghi	Milan (Ita)	13	2	26
	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	13	2	26
17	Harald Brattbakk	Rosenborg (Nor)	17	1.5	25.5
	Stevie Crawford	Dunfermline (Sco)	17	1.5	25.5

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

AUSTRIA

Dec 4: Salzburg 2 Sturm Graz 1.
Feb 22: Grazer AK 4 Bregenz 1.
Feb 23: Karnten 1 Austria Wien 3.
Mar 1: Austria Wien 1 Salzburg 0; Karnten 0 Pasching 1; SV Ried 0 Rapid Wien 0; Admira 1 Bregenz 0.
Mar 2: Sturm Graz 0 Grazer AK 5.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	23	16	4	3	47	15	52
Pasching	22	10	6	6	30	22	36
Sturm Graz	23	10	3	10	32	40	33
Grazer AK	23	8	8	7	33	27	32
SV Ried	22	8	7	7	30	24	31
Rapid Wien	22	8	7	7	30	25	31
Salzburg	23	7	6	10	26	37	27
Karnten	23	6	5	12	26	36	23
Admira	22	5	7	10	20	38	22
Bregenz	23	4	9	10	30	40	21

BELGIUM

Friday, February 7

Genk 5 (Sonck 10, 55, 72, 79, Thijs pen 19)
Mouscron 4 (Vidovic 8, Gregoire 43, Martic 63, Mpenza 66) Att: 23,354

Saturday, February 8

La Louviere 2 (Kenmogne 2, Ishiaku 55)
Lokeren 4 (Bangoura 19, 89, Kristinsson 31, 40) Att: 5,000

Mechelen 0
Club Brugge 8 (Martens 24, 43, 65, Verheyen 26, 32, De Cock 29, Simons 37, Smolders 88) Att: 8,500

Royal Antwerp 3 (Sergeant 8, 60, Nielsen 28)
Charleroi 1 (Adelino 43) Att: 4,250

Westerlo 1 (Mennes 40)
Lierse 2 (Kone 43, De Wilde 89) Att: 7,500

Sunday, February 9

Beveren 2 (Zezeto 50, Theunis 75)
St Truiden 1 (Boffin 44) Att: 3,000

Gent 0
Anderlecht 2 (De Boeck 6, Mornar 67) Att: 10,000

Lommel 2 (Scavone 50, Noben 84)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Kpaka pen 40) Att: 4,500

Standard 0
Mons 0 Att: 15,882

Saturday, February 15

Club Brugge 4 (Mendoza 26, Simons pen 30, Ceh 31, Verheyen 49)
Standard 2 (Arst 32, Meyssen 90) Att: 21,993

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Kpaka pen 28, pen 30)
La Louviere 0 Att: 6,800

Lierse 3 (Huysegems 18, Kone 70, Snoeckx 89)
Mechelen 0 Att: 9,000

Lokeren 1 (Bangoura 89)
Beveren 2 (Kaiper 34, 90) Att: 6,000

Lommel 1 (De Conde 43)
Genk 3 (Vandenbergh 13, Dagano 67, 90) Att: 10,000

Mons 0
Gent 1 (Kaklamanos 11) Att: 5,500

St Truiden 1 (Boffin 15)
Westerlo 0 Att: 5,000

Sunday, February 16

Anderlecht 4 (Jestrovic 14, 45, 58, Tihinen 22)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots 54) Att: 22,464

Charleroi 5 (Eduardo 30, Dufer 42, Boeka-Lisasi 53, 57, 70)
Mouscron 0 Att: 9,233

Saturday, February 22

Beveren 3 (Wostijn 9, Yapi Yapo 20, Kaiper 90)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Kpaka 38) Att: 4,500

Genk 3 (Dagano 22, 88, Vandenbergh 71)
Charleroi 0 Att: 23,512

Mechelen 0
St Truiden 0 Att: 6,100

Royal Antwerp 0
Mons 1 (Roussel 86) Att: 4,000

Standard 1 (Walasiak 6)
Lierse 1 (Kone 34) Att: 18,000

Westerlo 1 (Brogno pen 26)
Lokeren 3 (Bangoura 20, Gretarsson pen 73, De Beule 88) Att: 5,000

Sunday, February 23

Gent 1 (Oyawole 89)
Club Brugge 4 (Ndikumana og 53, Martens 56, 87, Ceh 85) Att: 11,023

La Louviere 1 (Odemwingie 43)
Lommel 0 Att: 3,000

Mouscron 1 (Mpenza 24)
Anderlecht 0 Att: 10,000

Friday, February 28

La Louviere 2 (Haydock 70, Kenmogne 74)
Genk 2 (Ingrao 27, Thijs 88) Att: 7,500

St Truiden 0
Standard 1 (Walasiak 66) Att: 10,000

Saturday, March 1

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Kpaka pen 45)
Westerlo 1 (Dosunmu 31) Att: 6,000

Lierse 2 (Huysegems 42, 45)
Gent 1 (Kraouche 59) Att: 8,000

Lommel 3 (Waligora 15, 20, De Conde 54)
Beveren 2 (Boka 64, Zezeto 83) Att: 3,000

Mons 2 (Roussel pen 25, 54)
Mouscron 0 Att: 6,900

Sunday, March 2

Anderlecht 2 (Baseggio 44, Jestrovic 67)
Charleroi 0 Att: 22,642

Club Brugge 1 (Clement 45)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 20,908

Lokeren 5 (Kristinsson 5, Gretarsson 29, 48, De Beule 55, Bangoura 78)
Mechelen 0 Att: 4,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	23	21	1	1	75	19	64
Lierse	23	14	6	3	41	21	48
Anderlecht	23	15	2	6	51	26	47
Lokeren	23	14	4	5	51	32	46
St Truiden	23	12	6	5	51	29	42
Genk	23	12	6	5	55	37	42
Mons	23	11	3	9	34	26	36
Standard	23	9	7	7	37	30	34
Gent	23	10	2	11	35	37	32
Mouscron	23	8	5	10	36	46	29
Beveren	23	8	2	13	31	54	26
Royal Antwerp	23	7	4	12	32	43	25
La Louviere	23	6	6	11	25	32	24
Westerlo	23	7	2	14	20	39	23
Germinal B	23	6	4	13	37	44	22
Lommel	23	5	3	15	22	42	18
Charleroi	23	3	6	14	26	53	15
Mechelen	23	2	5	16	15	64	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
20 Wesley Sonck (Genk)
16 Paul Kpaka (Germinal Beerschot)
16 Cedric Roussel (Mons)

BELGIAN CUP – semi-finals

1st legs
Mar 4: Lommel 3 La Louviere 2.
Mar 5: St Truiden 1 Germinal Beerschot 0.

BULGARIA

Feb 22: Rilski Sportist 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 0.
Feb 23: Spartak Varna 1 CSKA 1; Naftex 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0; Lovech 3 Dobrudzha 0; Botev 0 Chernomorets 0; Levski 1 Cherno More 0; Slavia 1 Marek 1.
Feb 28: Slavia 5 Rilski Sportist 0; Marek 1 Levski 5; Cherno More 4 Botev 0; Chernomorets 1 Lovech 4; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Spartak Varna 0; CSKA 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 0.
Mar 1: Dobrudzha 2 Naftex 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	15	14	1	0	38	6	43
Levski	15	12	1	2	37	13	37
Lovech	15	10	3	2	29	7	33
Slavia	15	9	2	4	36	17	29
Lok Plovdiv	15	9	2	4	32	18	29
Cherno More	15	7	3	5	19	12	24
Naftex	15	8	0	7	20	20	24
Chernomorets	15	5	2	8	19	25	17
Marek	15	5	2	8	19	25	17
Spartak Varna	15	4	3	8	14	22	15
Lok Sofia	15	3	3	9	10	21	12
Botev	15	3	2	10	17	38	11
Rilski Sportist	15	1	3	11	10	33	6
Dobrudzha	15	1	1	13	9	52	4

CROATIA

Feb 22: Osijek 1 Sibenik 0; Rijeka 2 Kamen Ingrad 1; Varteks 3 Cibalia 0; Zagreb 1 Dinamo 3; Zadar 2 Pomorac 3.
Feb 23: Hajduk 2 Slaven 0.
Mar 1: Zadar 1 Osijek 0; Pomorac 0 Hajduk 3; Slaven 0 Zagreb 0; Cibalia 3 Rijeka 1; Kamen Ingrad 4 Sibenik 0.
Mar 2: Dinamo 3 Varteks 1.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	19	15	3	1	46	16	48
Hajduk	19	14	2	3	35	12	44
Varteks	19	13	0	6	35	19	39
Cibalia	19	9	4	6	26	24	31
Kamen Ingrad	19	7	8	4	22	19	29
Slaven	19	8	2	9	22	23	26
Zagreb	19	6	6	7	23	26	24
Zadar	19	4	6	9	18	32	18
Rijeka	19	5	2	12	22	29	17
Osijek	19	4	5	10	19	37	17
Pomorac	19	2	7	10	23	38	13
Sibenik	19	2	5	12	19	35	11

CZECH REPUBLIC

Feb 15: Teplice 1 Sparta 0.
Feb 16: Synot 1 Jablonec 0; Zizkov 1 Chmel Blsany 0; Slavia 4 Hradec Kralove 0; Ostrava 2 Zlin 2; Brno 1 Pribram 1; Liberec 2 Olomouc 1; Ceske Budejovice 3 Bohemians 3.
Feb 22: Liberec 1 Brno 0.
Feb 23: Pribram 1 Jablonec 1; Hradec Kralove 1 Chmel Blsany 3; Teplice 0 Ostrava 1; Bohemians 1 Slavia 1; Zlin 0 Zizkov 2.
Feb 24: Sparta 1 Ceske Budejovice 0.
Mar 1: Ostrava 3 Sparta 2.
Mar 2: Zizkov 1 Hradec Kralove 1; Jablonec 2 Zlin 2; Chmel Blsany 1 Olomouc 2; Synot 3 Liberec 1; Brno 1 Bohemians 1; Ceske Budejovice 0 Teplice 0.
Mar 3: Slavia 3 Pribram 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slavia	18	11	6	1	37	11	39
Sparta	18	12	3	3	29	9	39
Liberec	18	10	2	6	28	22	32
Teplice	18	10	2	6	23	19	32
Ostrava	18	9	4	5	29	20	31
Zizkov	18	9	4	5	25	22	31
Synot	17	8	4	5	22	19	28
Pribram	18	5	6	7	17	19	21
Chmel Blsany	18	6	3	9	17	21	21
Ceske Budejovice	18	6	3	9	23	31	21
Brno	18	5	5	8	19	21	20
Jablonec	18	4	8	6	19	27	20
Zlin	18	4	6	8	19	29	18
Olomouc	17	3	5	9	15	21	14
Bohemians	18	2	6	10	24	39	12
Hradec Kralove	18	1	9	8	15	31	12

ENGLAND

Saturday, February 8

Birmingham 1 (Savage pen 87)
Chelsea 3 (Zola 44, Gudjohnsen 49, Hasselbaink pen 69) Att: 29,475

Blackburn 1 (Thompson 26)
Southampton 0 Att: 24,896

Charlton 2 (Kishishev 19, Lisbie 83)
Everton 1 (McBride 69) Att: 26,623

Fulham 2 (Maibranque pen 14, Harley 36)
Aston Villa 1 (Barry 3) Att: 17,092

Leeds 1 (Johnson 20)
West Ham 0 Att: 40,126

Liverpool 1 (Riise 74)
Middlesbrough 1 (Geremi 38) Att: 42,247

Tottenham 4 (Poyet 14, Doherty 45, Davies 67, Sheringham 84)
Sunderland 1 (Phillips 26) Att: 36,075

West Brom 1 (Johnson 90)
Bolton 1 (Pedersen 19) Att: 26,933

Sunday, February 9

Manchester Utd 1 (Van Nistelrooy 18)
Manchester City 1 (Goater 86) Att: 67,646

Newcastle 1 (Robert 53)
Arsenal 1 (Henry 36) Att: 52,157

Wednesday, February 19

Fulham 3 (Saha 72, Wome 74, Malbranque 77)
West Brom 0 Att: 15,799

Saturday, February 22

Bolton 1 (N'Gotty 61)
Manchester Utd 1 (Solskjaer 90) Att: 27,409

Charlton 3 (Euell 51, Johansson 87, 90)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 26,257

Chelsea 1 (Hasselbaink 90)
Blackburn 2 (Yorke 86, Dunn 89) Att: 40,850

Everton 2 (Radzinski 83, 90)
Southampton 1 (Beattie 33) Att: 36,569

Leeds 0
Newcastle 3 (Dyer 17, 48, Shearer 54) Att: 40,025

Manchester City 1 (Anelka 87)
Arsenal 5 (Bergkamp 4, Pires 12, Henry 15, Campbell 19, Vieira 53) Att: 34,960

Sunderland 1 (Phillips 56)
Middlesbrough 3 (Riggott 21, 28, Christie 59) Att: 42,134

Sunday, February 23

Birmingham 2 (Clemence 34, Morrison 68)
Liverpool 1 (Owen 77) Att: 29,449

West Brom 1 (Dichio 50)
West Ham 2 (Sinclair 45, 67) Att: 27,042

Monday, February 24

Tottenham 1 (Sheringham pen 38)
Fulham 1 (King og 15) Att: 34,704

Saturday, March 1

Blackburn 1 (Dunn 13)
Manchester City 0 Att: 28,647

Fulham 1 (Saha 85)
Sunderland 0 Att: 16,286

Middlesbrough 1 (Juninho 74)
Everton 1 (Watson 23) Att: 32,473

Newcastle 2 (Hasselbaink og 31, Bernard 53)
Chelsea 1 (Lampard 37) Att: 52,157

Southampton 1 (Beattie 8)
West Brom 0 Att: 31,915

West Ham 2 (Ferdinand 31, Carrick 47)
Tottenham 0 Att: 35,049

Sunday, March 2

Arsenal 2 (Jeffers 26, Pires 45)
Charlton 0 Att: 38,015

Monday, March 3

Aston Villa 0
Birmingham 2 (Lazaridis 74, Horsfield 77) Att: 42,602

Wednesday, March 5

Manchester Utd 2 (Radebe og 20, Silvestre 79)
Leeds 1 (Viduka 64) Att: 67,135

Middlesbrough 1 (Geremi 62)
Newcastle 0 Att: 34,814

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	29	19	6	4	64	30	63
Man Utd	29	17	7	5	47	27	58
Newcastle	29	17	4	8	47	34	55
Everton	29	14	7	8	38	34	49
Chelsea	29	13	9	7	50	31	48
Charlton	29	13	6	10	39	36	45
Liverpool	28	11	10	7	39	28	43
Blackburn	29	11	10	8	35	32	43
Tottenham	29	12	7	10	41	40	43
Southampton	29	11	9	9	30	28	42
Middlesbrough	29	10	8	11	35	32	38
Man City	29	11	5	13	39	44	38
Fulham	29	10	7	12	33	35	37
Aston Villa	29	10	5	14	31	34	35
Leeds	29	10	4	15	35	39	34
Birmingham	29	8	8	13	27	41	32
Bolton	28	5	11	12	31	45	26
West Ham	29	6	8	15	32	53	26
West Brom	29	5	6	18	21	44	21
Sunderland	29	4	7	18	19	46	19

LEADING GOALSCORERS
19 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
18 James Beattie (Southampton)
15 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)

FA CUP – 5th rnd (last 16)

Feb 15: Manchester Utd 0 Arsenal 2; Sheffield Utd 2 Walsall 0; Southampton 2 Norwich 0; Sunderland 0 Watford 1.
Feb 16: Crystal Palace 1 Leeds 2; Fulham 1 Burnley 1; Stoke 0 Chelsea 2; Wolverhampton 3 Rochdale 1.

5th rnd replay
Feb 26: Burnley 3 Fulham 0.

LEAGUE CUP – Final

Mar 2 - Millennium stadium, Cardiff
Liverpool 2 (Gerrard 39, Owen 86)
Manchester Utd 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 74,500. **Ref:** Durkin

FRANCE

Saturday, February 8

Ajaccio 0
Marseille 2 (Bakayoko 34, Sakho pen 79) Att: 8,500

Bordeaux 0
Bastia 2 (Essien 21, Laslandes 54) Att: 26,863

Le Havre 2 (Martot 34, Lesage 74)
Sedan 1 (H Camara 45) Att: 10,496

Lille 0
Lens 2 (Song 42, Vairelles 76) Att: 20,500

Lyon 0
Troyes 0 Att: 32,019

Nice 2 (Everson 54, Mionnet 63)
Sochaux 2 (Pagis 40, Frau pen 78) Att: 14,078

Paris SG 1 (J Leroy 3)
Montpellier 3 (Mezague 14, 20, Mansare 75) Att: 35,657

Rennes 0
Monaco 0 Att: 16,433

Strasbourg 3 (Bassila 53, Ljuboja 55, Martins 57)
Guingamp 1 (Carnot 69) Att: 8,452

Sunday, February 9

Auxerre 0
Nantes 1 (Moldovan 2) Att: 7,000

Saturday, February 15

Nantes 0
Sochaux 1 (Mathieu 54) Att: 30,000

Wednesday, February 19

Troyes 2 (Gousse pen 3, Saifi 59)
Lille 0 Att: 10,177

Saturday, February 22

Bastia 1 (Maurice 45)
Nice 1 (Cherrad 73) Att: 9,165

Guingamp 3 (Guillaume 61, Drogba 68, 90)
Paris SG 2 (Ronaldinho 21, J Leroy 55) Att: 15,616

Lens 4 (Sibierski 10, Vairelles 20, Moreira 64, 66)
Montpellier 0 Att: 36,182

Lyon 4 (Juninho 17, Luyindula 45, 73, Govou 62)
Rennes 1 (Delaye 22) Att: 37,949

Marseille 2 (Bakayoko 13, Johansen 75)
Lille 0 Att: 56,000

Nantes 1 (Gillet pen 67)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 31,998

Sedan 0
Bordeaux 1 (Feindouno 38) Att: 17,578

Sochaux 1 (Mathieu 90)
Le Havre 0 Att: 12,418

Troyes 1 (Benachour 6)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 10,501

Sunday, February 23

Monaco 3 (Prso 13, Giuly 49, Nonda 72)
Auxerre 1 (Cisse 55) Att: 10,000

Friday, February 28

Nice 1 (Cherrad 32)
Nantes 1 (Vahirua 74) Att: 16,399

Saturday, March 1

Ajaccio 0
Lens 0 Att: 4,500

Bordeaux 2 (Pauleta 11, Darcheville pen 35)
Sochaux 0 Att: 25,368

Le Havre 2 (Sinama-Pongolle 41, Ciechielski 90)
Bastia 0 Att: 10,659

Lille 1 (Landrin 87)
Monaco 3 (Giuly 47, Nonda 85, 90) Att: 14,872

Montpellier 2 (Mansare 5, Mezague 73)
Guingamp 0 Att: 8,242

Paris SG 4 (Pedron 35, Aloisio 58, Regis og 70, J Leroy 90)
Troyes 2 (Adam 11, Benachour 30) Att: 36,941

Rennes 1 (Maoulida 89)
Sedan 0 Att: 16,881

Strasbourg 0
Marseille 0 Att: 27,063

Sunday, March 2

Auxerre 1 (Cisse 90)
Lyon 2 (Govou 5, Luyindula 37) Att: 10,000

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	29	14	10	5	46	23	52
Marseille	29	15	7	7	32	23	52
Lyon	29	13	9	7	49	34	48
Bordeaux	28	13	7	8	40	28	46
Nice	29	11	12	6	33	23	45
Sochaux	28	12	8	8	29	24	44
Auxerre	28	12	7	9	28	26	43
Paris SG	29	11	9	9	39	30	42
Lens	28	10	12	6	35	26	42
Nantes	28	12	6	10	31	29	42
Bastia	29	12	6	11	31	32	42
Guingamp	28	11	4	13	39	42	37
Strasbourg	28	9	8	11	30	38	35
Le Havre	29	9	8	12	23	31	35
Rennes	29	8	7	14	24	33	31
Ajaccio	28	6	10	12	20	32	28
Lille	27	7	7	13	21	37	28
Montpellier	28	6	9	13	26	39	27
Sedan	28	7	6	15	28	44	27
Troyes	29	6	8	15	20	30	26

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Shabani Nonda (Monaco)
16 Pauleta (Bordeaux)
12 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)

FRENCH CUP – last 16

Feb 15: Angouleme 0 Guingamp 0 (aet; Angouleme 3-2 on pens); Bourg-Peronnas 1 Auxerre 3; Libourne-St-Seurin 0 Rennes 3; Martigues 2 Metz 1; Schiltigheim 3 Toulouse 0.
Feb 16: Bordeaux 4 Wasquehal 1; Laval 0 Paris SG 1; Lorient 1 Lille 0.

GERMANY

Saturday, February 8

Bochum 2 (Hashemian 68, 84)
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Babic 78) Att: 20,643

Hannover 4 (Idrissou 10, 21, 24, Stefulj 71)
Nurnberg 2 (Junior 32, Ciric 53) Att: 26,157

Hansa Rostock 0
Energie Cottbus 0 Att: 17,000

Hertha 4 (Preetz 28, Alex Alves 39, Matellan og 51, Marcelinho 88)
Schalke 2 (Mpenza 1, Oude Kamphuis 68) Att: 39,962

Kaiserslautern 2 (Knavs 35, Klose pen 88)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 38,199

Werder Bremen 1 (Klasnic 45)
1860 Munich 2 (Lauth 53, Borimirov 82) Att: 34,000

Wolfsburg 2 (Schnoor 25, Maric 50)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 15,976

Sunday, February 9

Bayern Munich 1 (Pizarro 11)
Hamburg 1 (Takahara 90) Att: 35,000

Stuttgart 1 (Soldo 77)
Borussia Dortmund 0 Att: 40,000

Saturday, February 15

Arminia Bielefeld 1 (Reinhardt 35)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Lokvenc 26) Att: 19,237

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Babic 38)
Hansa Rostock 2 (Salou 35, 41) Att: 22,500

Borussia Dortmund 4 (Reina 33, Koller 42, Frings pen 45, pen 68)
Bochum 1 (Buckley 8) Att: 66,000

Hamburg 2 (Cardoso 39, Benjamin 90)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 34,057

1860 Munich 0
Bayern Munich 5 (Scholl 58, 69, 80, Lizarazu 71, Pizarro 78) Att: 64,000

Nurnberg 1 (Muller 41)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 17,500

Schalke 2 (Mpenza 3, Hajto 45)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 60,678

Sunday, February 16

Energie Cottbus 3 (Da Silva 74, Reghecampf 77, Topic 81)
Hannover 0 Att: 14,000

Monchengladbach 0
Hertha 2 (Alex Alves 9, 14) Att: 24,200

Wednesday, February 19

Monchengladbach 2 (Schnoor og 33, Aidoo 72)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 22,950

Saturday, February 22

Bayern Munich 2 (Lizarazu 17, Elber 59)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 45,000

Hannover 1 (Popescu 14)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Schoof 80, Simak 90) Att: 35,869

Hansa Rostock 1 (Di Salvo 31)
Bochum 1 (Hashemian 61) Att: 14,800

Kaiserslautern 2 (Lokvenc 51, Klose 58)
Hamburg 0 Att: 34,882

Schalke 2 (Vermant 13, Van Kerckhoven 16)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Koller 52, Ewerthon 58) Att: 60,878

Werder Bremen 0
Energie Cottbus 1 (Topic 5) Att: 29,700

Wolfsburg 1 (Klimowicz 71)
1860 Munich 1 (Lauth 51) Att: 15,326

Sunday, February 23

Hertha 0
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 25,000

Stuttgart 4 (Kuranyi 8, 88, Amanatidis 24, Ganea 86)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 22,000

Saturday, March 1

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Bierofka 11, Schoof 50, Juan 61)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 22,500

Bochum 1 (Christiansen 63)
Hannover 2 (Vinicius 6, Bobic 36) Att: 20,248

Borussia Dortmund 2 (Dede 42, Madouni 82)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 65,000

Energie Cottbus 0
Bayern Munich 2 (Ballack 33, 58) Att: 18,250

Monchengladbach 2 (Kluge 57, Demo 68)
Schalke 2 (Waldoch 26, Hajto 64) Att: 33,000

1860 Munich 0
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 23,000

Nurnberg 1 (Muller pen 25)
Wolfsburg 1 (Maric 90) Att: 18,500

Sunday, March 2

Arminia Bielefeld 0
Stuttgart 1 (Meissner 15) Att: 22,150

Hamburg 1 (Hoogma 55)
Hertha 0 Att: 37,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	23	16	5	2	49	15	53
B Dortmund	23	12	7	4	39	19	43
Stuttgart	23	12	6	5	38	26	42
Schalke	23	9	10	4	33	25	37
Hamburg	23	10	6	7	28	28	36
Werder Bremen	23	10	4	9	37	37	34
Hertha	23	9	6	8	28	26	33
1860 Munich	23	9	6	8	32	33	33
Bochum	23	8	6	9	39	39	30
Hansa Rostock	23	7	7	9	25	28	28
Wolfsburg	23	8	4	11	25	30	28
B Leverkusen	23	7	5	11	31	37	26
Arminia Bielefeld	23	6	8	9	24	30	26
Hannover	23	7	5	11	32	43	26
Nurnberg	23	7	4	12	28	37	25
M'gladbach	23	6	5	12	24	32	23
Energie Cottbus	23	6	5	12	22	41	23
Kaiserslautern	23	5	7	11	25	33	22

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
13 Thomas Christiansen (Bochum)
12 Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)
12 Kevin Kuranyi (Stuttgart)

GERMAN CUP – semi-finals

Mar 4: Kaiserslautern 3 Werder Bremen 0.
Mar 5: Bayern Munich 3 Bayer Leverkusen 1.

GREECE

Feb 8: Ionikos 2 Giannina 0; Xanthi 1 Proodeftiki 0.
Feb 9: Panathinaikos 2 AEK 1; Olympiakos 2 Iraklis 1; Panahaiki 0 Panionios 2; OFI 2 Akratitos 0; Aris 2 Aigaleo 1; Kallithea 1 PAOK 2.
Feb 15: Aigaleo 4 Panahaiki 0; Giannina 0 Aris 1.
Feb 16: Iraklis 3 Panionios 1; Akratitos 2 Olympiakos 5; PAOK 2 OFI 0; Proodeftiki 1 Kallithea 1; Panathinaikos 1 Ionikos 0; AEK 3 Xanthi 2.
Feb 22: Panionios 1 Aigaleo 0; OFI 2 Proodeftiki 0.
Feb 23: Olympiakos 4 PAOK 3; Akratitos 0 Iraklis 2; Panahaiki 0 Giannina 2; Aris 1 Panathinaikos 3; Kallithea 1 AEK 3; Xanthi 0 Ionikos 0.
Mar 1: Iraklis 2 Aigaleo 1; Giannina 1 Panionios 2; Xanthi 0 Aris 2.
Mar 2: PAOK 1 Akratitos 1; AEK 3 OFI 1; Proodeftiki 1 Olympiakos 3; Panathinaikos 2 Panahaiki 0; Ionikos 1 Kallithea 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	21	16	2	3	32	13	50
Olympiakos	21	14	6	1	52	17	48
AEK	21	12	5	4	42	22	41
PAOK	21	12	4	5	44	25	40
Panionios	21	12	4	5	26	16	40
Aris	21	10	5	6	24	23	35
Iraklis	21	10	4	7	30	22	34
Xanthi	21	6	9	6	22	19	27
OFI	21	7	6	8	25	24	27
Aigaleo	21	5	8	8	19	25	23
Proodeftiki	21	5	7	9	19	24	22
Giannina	21	4	5	12	17	27	17
Kallithea	21	3	8	10	20	31	17
Ionikos	21	3	8	10	12	28	17
Akratitos	21	3	4	14	18	44	13
Panahaiki	21	1	5	15	7	49	8

HOLLAND

Friday, February 7

Zwolle 0
Willem II 3 (Quinn 13, Van der Gun 45, Ceesay 78) Att: 4,500

Saturday, February 8

Heerenveen 5 (Fortes Rodriguez og 2, De Jong 9, Hansma 44, Venema 63, Samaras 86)
AZ 0 Att: 14,300

RBC 1 (Vos pen 44)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 5,000

RKC 0
PSV 1 (Robben 40) Att: 8,000

Roda JC 2 (Anastasiou 7, Sonkaya 79)
Vitesse 0 Att: 12,000

Sunday, February 9

Ajax 1 (Ibrahimovic 28)
Feyenoord 1 (Van Persie 45) Att: 50,777

Groningen 0
Twente 0 Att: 11,790

NEC 2 (Zonneveld 46, Demouge 70)
NAC 0 Att: 10,650

Utrecht 2 (Roiha 54, Kuijt 71)
Excelsior 2 (Mtiliga 21, Van Dieren 66) Att: 15,500

Friday, February 14

RBC 0
Utrecht 1 (Kuijt 20) Att: 5,000

Saturday, February 15

Ajax 2 (Van der Meyde 38, Ibrahimovic 59)
Groningen 1 (Schoenmakers 73) Att: 47,215

AZ 1 (Kromkamp 85)
Feyenoord 4 (Van Persie 12, Van Hooijdonk 15, 30, Kalou 18) Att: 8,720

NAC 2 (Engelaar 21, Schreuder 75)
Excelsior 1 (Holman 72) Att: 12,153

PSV 6 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 1, Kezman 3, 9, 25, Van Bommel 12, Robben 59)
Zwolle 0 Att: 33,000

Willem II 5 (Ceesay 20, Quinn 27, Landzaat 48, Shoukov 64, 74)
Roda JC 0 Att: 13,250

Sunday, February 16

De Graafschap 1 (Smit 18)
Heerenveen 5 (Denneboom 39, 64, De Jong 46, Sibon 49, Selakovic 90) Att: 11,000

RKC 1 (Van Diemen 41)
Vitesse 0 Att: 6,249

Twente 1 (Polak 78)
NEC 2 (Hesp pen 18, Hersi 34) Att: 13,250

Wednesday, February 19

AZ 3 (Lamey 8, Perez 20, El Khattabi 87)
NAC 1 (Van den Eede 54) Att: 7,152

Excelsior 0
Roda JC 2 (Soetaers 4, Anastasiou 33) Att: 2,258

Vitesse 2 (Jansen 31, Peeters 61)
Zwolle 1 (Van Beukering 59) Att: 21,000

Friday, February 21

NEC 1 (Hersi 63)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 11,250

Saturday, February 22

Excelsior 1 (Holman 71)
RBC 2 (Hellemons 46, Keller 89) Att: 2,638

PSV 1 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 9)
NAC 0 Att: 33,500

Roda JC 2 (Sonko 39, Soetaers 90)
Twente 0 Att: 12,500

Vitesse 2 (Amoah pen 75, Jansen 85)
AZ 2 (Perez 34, Buskermolen 73) Att: 22,500

Sunday, February 23

Feyenoord 4 (Van Hooijdonk 32, 35, Emerton 39, Buffel 55)
Groningen 1 (Van Gessel 83) Att: 44,000

Utrecht 1 (Kuijt 71)
Ajax 0 Att: 18,925

Zwolle 2 (Promes 30, Van Beukering 64)
RKC 1 (Janssen 63) Att: 4,168

Tuesday, February 25

NEC 1 (Ax 45)
Willem II 0 Att: 10,250

Wednesday, February 26

Utrecht 2 (Schut 29, Kuijt pen 35)
Heerenveen 2 (Sibon 13, Nurmela pen 39) Att: 16,300

Friday, February 28

De Graafschap 1 (Van Gastel 21)
Roda JC 1 (Soetaers 55) Att: 10,500

RBC 1 (Sillah 61)
Willem II 0 Att: 5,000

Saturday, March 1

Excelsior 1 (Holman 72)
RKC 2 (Hoogendorp 32, 60) Att: 2,368

Heerenveen 0
PSV 1 (Robben 90) Att: 13,500

Twente 0
AZ 0 Att: 13,000

Sunday, March 2

Ajax 2 (Pienaar 27, 90)
Vitesse 0 Att: 48,162

Feyenoord 2 (Buffel 14, Van Hooijdonk 86)
NAC 1 (Boussaboun 5) Att: 40,100

Groningen 4 (Tuhuteru 14, Drent 47, Krstev 73, 80)
Zwolle 0 Att: 11,829

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	22	18	3	1	54	10	57
Ajax	22	15	5	2	55	21	50
Feyenoord	22	14	4	4	55	26	46
Roda JC	22	10	6	6	37	32	36
NEC	22	10	6	6	28	27	36
RKC	22	10	4	8	24	27	34
Utrecht	21	8	8	5	29	25	32
Willem II	22	9	4	9	34	31	31
NAC	22	7	9	6	27	22	30
Heerenveen	22	7	7	8	37	34	28
AZ	22	7	5	10	33	52	26
RBC	22	7	4	11	24	34	25
Twente	22	5	9	8	24	32	24
Vitesse	22	5	5	12	21	28	20
Excelsior	22	4	7	11	25	39	19
Groningen	22	4	5	13	22	35	17
Zwolle	22	4	4	14	19	46	16
De Graafschap	21	3	5	13	20	47	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
22 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
14 Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Feyenoord)
11 Thomas Buffel (Feyenoord)
11 Dirk Kuijt (Utrecht)

DUTCH CUP – quarter-finals

Mar 4: Excelsior 1 Utrecht 3.
Mar 5: Ajax 4 Groningen 1; Feyenoord 3 Vitesse 1; PSV 2 Heerenveen 1.

ITALY

Saturday, February 8

Juventus 1 (Trezeguet pen 7)
Empoli 0 Att: 34,561

Udinese 2 (Jankulovski 18, Muzzi 84)
Piacenza 1 (Hubner 77) Att: 14,987

Sunday, February 9

Bologna 2 (Signori pen 68, pen 72)
Atalanta 3 (Pinardi 27, 49, Rossini 90) Att: 19,802

Brescia 0
Chievo 0 Att: 15,212

Como 2 (Caccia 63, Amoruso 76)
Parma 2 (Mutu pen 28, pen 86) Att: 6,400

Inter 3 (Vieri 8, Kallon 37, pen 40)
Reggina 0 Att: 64,319

Lazio 1 (Simeone 32)
Torino 1 (Ferrante 68) Att: 33,535

Modena 1 (Kamara 40)
Roma 1 (Dellas 89) Att: 15,463

Perugia 1 (Miccoli 36)
Milan 0 Att: 18,853

Saturday, February 15

Chievo 2 (Corini pen 22, pen 36)
Inter 1 (Vieri 70) Att: 34,464

Roma 0
Brescia 0 Att: 53,467

Sunday, February 16

Atalanta 0
Udinese 0 Att: 13,305

Empoli 1 (Carparelli 7)
Perugia 1 (Vryzas 5) Att: 5,781

Milan 2 (Inzaghi 62, Rivaldo 70)
Lazio 2 (Stankovic 21, Claudio Lopez pen 30) Att: 61,605

Parma 1 (Mutu 90)
Juventus 2 (Di Vaio 13, Tacchinardi 29) Att: 23,451

Piacenza 3 (Hubner pen 19, Maresca 40, De Cesare 62)
Bologna 1 (Bellucci 84) Att: 6,434

Reggina 4 (Cozza 33, 38, Diana 79, Mozart 88)
Como 1 (Caccia 11) Att: 23,756

Torino 1 (Vergassola 64)
Modena 1 (Milanetto 58) Att: 12,855

Saturday, February 22

Como 0
Juventus 3 (Juarez og 10, Di Vaio 22, Camoranesi 43) Att: 10,287

Torino 0
Milan 3 (Inzaghi 2, Seedorf 42, 45) Att: 16,343
Match abandoned in 63rd minute after teargas was used to prevent pitch invasion by Torino fans; result and scoreline stood

Sunday, February 23

Bologna 2 (Bellucci 14, Vanoli 69)
Empoli 0 Att: 20,272

Brescia 2 (Baggio pen 58, Petruzzi 86)
Reggina 1 (Di Michele 70) Att: 14,420

Inter 3 (Batistuta 65, Vieri 66, 67)
Piacenza 1 (Hubner 90) Att: 56,352

Lazio 0
Atalanta 0 Att: 33,611

Modena 1 (Sculli 75)
Chievo 0 Att: 13,538

Perugia 1 (Grosso 51)
Parma 2 (Adriano 30, Ferrari 72) Att: 7,197

Udinese 2 (Sensini 35, Iaquinta 72)
Roma 1 (Montella 54) Att: 16,339

Saturday, March 1

Brescia 0
Bologna 0 Att: 14,007

Parma 1 (Adriano 26)
Modena 1 (Scoponi 29) Att: 16,881

Sunday, March 2

Chievo 3 (Pellissier 27, Cossato 57, D'Anna 63)
Torino 2 (Sommese 13, Donati 35) Att: 11,341

Juventus 3 (Guglielminpietro og 4, Nedved 34, Camoranesi 83)
Inter 0 Att: 57,393

Milan 3 (Inzaghi 32, 78, Tomasson 69)
Atalanta 3 (Maldini og 1, Rossini 27, 29) Att: 60,095

Perugia 2 (Ze Maria 11, Grosso 41)
Lazio 2 (Corradi 15, Negro 85) Att: 9,522

Piacenza 0
Como 1 (Amoruso 6) Att: 7,130

Reggina 3 (Bonazzoli 3, Di Michele 10, Cozza 62)
Udinese 2 (Pizarro pen 7, Iaquinta 45) Att: 23,724

Roma 3 (Totti 32, Montella 51, 70)
Empoli 1 (Di Natale 12) Att: 52,736

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	23	15	6	2	44	16	51
Inter	23	15	3	5	46	26	48
Milan	23	14	5	4	44	19	47
Lazio	23	10	11	2	39	23	41
Chievo	23	12	4	7	34	23	40
Udinese	23	10	6	7	25	24	36
Parma	23	9	8	6	39	28	35
Bologna	23	8	8	7	27	25	32
Roma	23	8	7	8	36	32	31
Perugia	23	8	6	9	29	32	30
Brescia	23	6	10	7	26	29	28
Modena	23	7	5	11	17	31	26
Reggina	23	7	4	12	26	41	25
Empoli	23	6	6	11	26	34	24
Atalanta	23	5	9	9	26	35	24
Piacenza	23	4	4	15	20	39	16
Como	23	2	9	12	16	36	15
Torino	23	2	7	14	15	42	13

LEADING GOALSCORERS
21 Christian Vieri (Inter)
13 Filippo Inzaghi (Milan)
12 Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus)
12 Adrian Mutu (Parma)
12 Francesco Totti (Roma)

PORTUGAL

Friday, February 7

Santa Clara 1 (Figueiredo 8)
Boavista 1 (Silva 58)

Saturday, February 8

Uniao Leiria 0
Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 14, Tiago 44, 53)

Varzim 1 (Sergio Carvalho 58)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Joao Pinto 34)

Sunday, February 9

Academica 2 (Dario 7, 82)
Gil Vicente 0

Moreirense 2 (Vitor Pereira 33, Afonso Martins 90)
Sporting Braga 2 (Abiodum 59, Arrieta 84)

Nacional 1 (Cleomir 76)
Beira Mar 0

Pacos Ferreira 3 (Renato 62, Puntas 83, 90)
Belenenses 2 (Antchouet 47, Ludemar 59)

FC Porto 2 (Cesar Peixoto 25, Capucho 39)
Guimaraes 1 (Romeu 64)

Setubal 1 (Jorginho 24)
Maritimo 0

Saturday, February 15

Boavista 0
Pacos Ferreira 0

Maritimo 2 (Van der Gaag 17, Eric Gaucho 71)
FC Porto 1 (Derlei 67)

Sunday, February 16

Beira Mar 5 (Fary 11, 84, Ferreira 13, 33, Ricardo Sousa 19)
Setubal 3 (Rui Lima 6, Rui Miguel pen 37, Meyong 90)

Belenenses 4 (Carlos Fernandes 45, Ludemar 55, 74, 90)
Varzim 1 (Paulo Vida 69)

Benfica 2 (Zahovic 23, 27)
Nacional 0

Gil Vicente 1 (Nunes 56)
Santa Clara 2 (George 48, Bruno Ribeiro 90)

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Jardel 55, pen 65)
Sporting Braga 0

Uniao Leiria 2 (Douala 27, Maciel 56)
Moreirense 2 (Afonso Martins 64, Demetrios 89)

Monday, February 17

Guimaraes 1 (Rafael 90)
Academica 0

Friday, February 21

Sporting Braga 1 (Barroso pen 47)
Belenenses 1 (Verona 53)

Saturday, February 22

Setubal 2 (Pascal 18, Rui Miguel 22)
Benfica 6 (Simao 43, pen 70, 89, Marcio Carlos og 61, Tiago 63, Sokota 80)

Sunday, February 23

Academica 2 (Andre 33, Dario 63)
Maritimo 0

Pacos Ferreira 2 (Joao Armando 44, Cadu 76)
Gil Vicente 0

FC Porto 3 (Cesar Peixoto pen 5, Helder Postiga 24, Jankauskas 90)
Beira Mar 0

Santa Clara 2 (Pedro Henriques 35, Fonseca 74)
Guimaraes 1 (Ricardo Silva 52)

Varzim 1 (Quim Berto 45)
Boavista 1 (Luiz Claudio 44)

Monday, February 24

Moreirense 1 (Armando 51)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Jardel 12, Rui Bento 63)

Nacional 2 (Adriano 5, 72)
Uniao Leiria 2 (Hugo Almeida 59, Maciel 89)

Friday, February 28

Maritimo 1 (Van der Gaag 14)
Santa Clara 1 (Bruno Ribeiro 89)

Saturday, March 1

Belenenses 1 (Rui Borges 80)
Sporting Lisbon 1 (Joao Pinto 44)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Hugo Almeida 29)
Setubal 1 (Jorginho 89)

Sunday, March 2

Beira Mar 1 (Gamboa 46)
Academica 0

Gil Vicente 2 (Paulo Alves pen 38, Nuno Guerreiro 84)
Varzim 1 (Pepa 90)

Guimaraes 1 (Fangueiro 25)
Pacos Ferreira 4 (Renato 5, 43, Pedrinha pen 11, Serginho 38)

Nacional 1 (Vitor Pereira 17)
Moreirense 1 (Patacas 37)

Monday, March 3

Boavista 2 (Paulo Turra 8, Eder 90)
Sporting Braga 1 (Jorge 48)

Tuesday, March 4

Benfica 0
FC Porto 1 (Deco 36)

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	24	20	3	1	52	19	63
Benfica	24	15	5	4	49	18	50
Sporting Lisbon	24	15	3	6	39	25	48
Guimaraes	24	11	5	8	39	32	38
Gil Vicente	24	11	2	11	35	37	35
Uniao Leiria	24	9	7	8	36	35	34
Belenenses	24	8	7	9	31	33	31
Boavista	24	7	9	8	23	22	30
Pacos Ferreira	24	8	6	10	26	33	30
Varzim	24	8	5	11	29	32	29
Nacional	24	7	8	9	26	30	29
Sporting Braga	24	7	8	9	22	34	29
Maritimo	24	8	3	13	27	40	27
Moreirense	24	5	10	9	28	33	25
Academica	24	6	7	11	26	35	25
Santa Clara	24	5	9	10	28	37	24
Setubal	24	4	10	10	26	33	22
Beira Mar	24	5	7	12	26	40	22

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)
12 Adriano (Nacional)
12 Eric Gaucho (Maritimo)

SCOTLAND

Saturday, February 8

Aberdeen 0
Partick 1 (Burns 13) Att: 11,334

Dunfermline 1 (Brewster 49)
Rangers 3 (McCann 38, Amoruso 71, Caniggia 90) Att: 8,754

Hearts 3 (Maybury 50, De Vries 53, McKenna 79)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 10,426

Motherwell 2 (Clarkson 31, Fagan 41)
Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 71) Att: 4,999

Sunday, February 9

Celtic 2 (Sylla 77, Sutton 85)
Livingston 1 (Zarate 52) Att: 57,169

Dundee Utd 1 (Mackay og 19)
Dundee 1 (Novo 30) Att: 10,457

Saturday, February 15

Hibernian 1 (O'Connor 67)
Dunfermline 3 (Mason 20, Crawford 39, 55) Att: 9,175

Rangers 1 (Severin og 41)
Hearts 0 Att: 49,459

Sunday, February 16

Aberdeen 3 (Sheerin pen 39, 71, McGuire 74)
Dundee Utd 0 Att: 9,146

Wednesday, February 19

Motherwell 2 (Pearson 19, Craig 50)
Dunfermline 1 (Crawford 52) Att: 3,741

Sunday, February 23

Kilmarnock 1 (Kanero 45)
Partick 0 Att: 5,651

Tuesday, February 25

Dundee 3 (Rae 9, Milner 86, Murray og 90)
Hibernian 0 Att: 8,414

Saturday, March 1

Dundee Utd 3 (Easton 38, Tod 47, Ogunmade 89)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 6,004

Hearts 2 (McKenna 30, Simmons 72)
Motherwell 1 (Lasley 53) Att: 11,704

Kilmarnock 2 (McSwegan 58, Canero 63)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 5,769

Partick 1 (Buchan 31)
Dundee 3 (Milne 15, Mackay 26, Novo 78) Att: 4,599

Sunday, March 2

Celtic 3 (Hartson 1, 23, Mjallby 90)
Hibernian 2 (McManus 37, 60) Att: 57,512

Livingston 1 (Dadi 90)
Rangers 2 (Amoruso 8, Arveladze 16) Att: 10,004

Wednesday, March 5

Dundee 0
Livingston 0 Att: 7,554

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	29	25	3	1	78	21	78
Celtic	28	23	3	2	72	19	72
Hearts	29	14	7	8	49	43	49
Kilmarnock	29	13	6	10	34	39	45
Dunfermline	29	12	3	14	44	54	39
Dundee	29	9	9	11	36	41	36
Hibernian	29	10	4	15	40	49	34
Livingston	29	7	6	16	36	45	27
Partick	29	6	9	14	28	46	27
Aberdeen	29	6	9	14	25	44	27
Motherwell	28	6	6	16	34	48	24
Dundee Utd	29	5	9	15	26	53	24

LEADING GOALSCORERS
24 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
17 Stevie Crawford (Dunfermline)
16 John Hartson (Celtic)

SCOTTISH CUP – 3rd rnd (last 32)

3rd rnd replays
Feb 10: Hamilton 3 Queen's Park 2.
Feb 17: Stranraer 1 Forfar 0.
Feb 18: Aberdeen 4 Queen of the South 1.

4th rnd (last 16)

Feb 22: Alloa 0 Falkirk 2; Ayr 0 Rangers 1; Clyde 0 Motherwell 2; Dundee 2 Aberdeen 0; Dunfermline 1 Hibernian 1; Inverness Caledonian Thistle 6 Hamilton 1; Morton 0 Stranraer 2.
Feb 23: Celtic 3 St Johnstone 0.

4th rnd replay
Mar 6: Hibernian 0 Dunfermline 2.

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

Feb 26: Hajduk K 0 Partizan 1; Javor 0 Rudar P 1; Mogren 1 Sutjeska 2; Obilic 3 OFK 1; Rad 5 Zeleznik 4; Radnicki O 0 Zemun 0; Red Star 3 Radnicki N 0; Zeta 3 Vojvodina 1.
Mar 1: Obilic 3 Rad 0; OFK 1 Zeta 1; Vojvodina 1 Javor 0; Partizan 4 Radnicki O 2; Zemun 5 Radnicki N 0; Red Star 3 Sutjeska 0; Mogren 3 Cukaricki 1; Sartid 0 Zeleznik 2.

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	19	16	2	1	51	24	50
Red Star	19	12	4	3	42	13	40
Zeleznik	19	12	2	5	35	22	38
OFK	19	11	2	6	35	23	35
Sutjeska	19	10	3	6	26	21	33
Vojvodina	19	10	2	7	32	22	32
Obilic	19	8	5	6	25	18	29
Hajduk K	18	8	4	6	23	15	28
Zeta	19	8	4	7	24	23	28
Zemun	19	8	3	8	26	24	27
Sartid	18	6	7	5	26	26	25
Radnicki O	19	4	8	7	20	25	20
Cukaricki	18	6	2	10	24	32	20
Rad	19	4	6	9	20	30	18
Javor	19	5	3	11	11	27	18
Mogren	19	3	4	12	20	40	13
Rudar P	18	3	4	11	11	34	13
Radnicki N	19	1	3	15	13	45	6

SPAIN

Saturday, February 8

Real Madrid 4 (Raul 44, Figo pen 49, Zidane 61, Ronaldo 88)
Betis 1 (Fernando 37) Att: 70,000

Villarreal 1 (Jorge Lopez pen 24)
Valladolid 0 Att: 17,000

Sunday, February 9

Barcelona 2 (Saviola 6, Overmars 14)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Ezquerro pen 48, Yeste 55) Att: 65,778

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Makaay 59)
Osasuna 1 (Inaki Munoz 47) Att: 26,700

Mallorca 0
Celta Vigo 2 (Edu 55, 64) Att: 18,000

Racing Santander 2 (Nafti 25, Regueiro 87)
Alaves 0 Att: 15,406

Rayo Vallecano 2 (Michel I 4, Peragon 80)
Malaga 1 (Dario Silva 86) Att: 14,105

Real Sociedad 0
Espanyol 0 Att: 30,000

Recreativo 1 (Raul Molina 31)
Valencia 1 (Fabio Aurelio 85) Att: 18,000

Sevilla 1 (Fredi 58)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Javi Moreno 50) Att: 40,000

Saturday, February 15

Espanyol 0
Barcelona 2 (Cocu 40, Xavi 42) Att: 39,000

Valencia 2 (Pellegrino 54, Juan Sanchez 74)
Malaga 0 Att: 35,000

Valladolid 0
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Makaay 57) Att: 12,000

Sunday, February 16

Alaves 1 (Tomic 76)
Villarreal 0 Att: 13,123

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Etxeberria 60, Ezquerro pen 89)
Sevilla 0 Att: 32,000

Atletico Madrid 2 (Movilla 15, Luis Garcia 60)
Mallorca 1 (Novo 20) Att: 45,000

Betis 3 (Fernando 12, pen 90, Filipescu 86)
Real Sociedad 2 (Nihat 74, 78) Att: 47,775

Celta Vigo 4 (Edu 38, 56, Jesuli 63, 70)
Recreativo 1 (Silvinho og 90) Att: 15,000

Osasuna 1 (Manfredini 37)
Real Madrid 0 Att: 18,766

Racing Santander 2 (Javi Guerrero 16, Benayoun 29)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 15,384

Saturday, February 22

Barcelona 4 (Saviola 2, 41, 54, Cocu 6)
Betis 0 Att: 67,128

Deportivo La Coruna 6 (Diego Tristan 16, 20, 60, Makaay 35, 52, Luque 63)
Alaves 0 Att: 26,000

Real Madrid 3 (Roberto Carlos 19, Ronaldo 22, Portillo 90)
Valladolid 1 (Fernando Sales 10) Att: 62,000

Sunday, February 23

Malaga 1 (Koke 89)
Celta Vigo 1 (Jose Ignacio 5) Att: 13,000

Mallorca 1 (Robles 21)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ezquerro 5) Att: 17,000

Rayo Vallecano 0
Valencia 4 (Angulo 10, Onopko og 35, Baraja 44, Mista 58) Att: 14,000

Real Sociedad 2 (Kovacevic 42, Mikel Alonso 64)
Osasuna 0 Att: 29,000

Recreativo 3 (Quique Romero 66, Xisco 83, Benitez 85)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 19,000

Sevilla 1 (Soldevilla og 12)
Espanyol 0 Att: 35,000

Villarreal 0
Racing Santander 3 (Mora 72, Bodipo 89, Regueiro 90) Att: 15,000

Saturday, March 1

Alaves 1 (Ivan Alonso 76)
Real Madrid 5 (Ronaldo 11, 65, 77, Raul 35, 82) Att: 11,351

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Del Horno 58, Ezquerro 76)
Recreativo 3 (Benitez 6, Quique Romero 13, Xisco 19) Att: 28,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo 32, Oscar 45)
Mallorca 0 Att: 17,200

Sunday, March 2

Atletico Madrid 2 (Luis Garcia 14, Fernando Torres 47)
Malaga 1 (Dario Silva 62) Att: 50,000

Betis 0
Sevilla 1 (Marcos Vales 76) Att: 38,000

Celta Vigo 1 (Edu 10)
Valencia 1 (Carew 7) Att: 17,000

Osasuna 2 (Ivan Rosado 79, Rivero 90)
Barcelona 2 (Saviola 61, Luis Enrique 86) Att: 18,917

Racing Santander 1 (Bodipo 46)
Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Makaay 4, Luque 80) Att: 17,138

Valladolid 3 (Olivera 1, 8, Oscar 21)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 15,000

Villarreal 2 (Guayre 21, De Nigris 89)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Luis Cembranos pen 78) Att: 16,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	24	13	9	2	54	25	48
Real Sociedad	24	13	8	3	40	30	47
Valencia	24	13	7.	4	41	18	46
Dep La Coruna	24	13	6	5	39	26	45
Celta Vigo	24	11	5	8	30	22	38
Betis	24	10	6	8	35	35	36
Atletico Madrid	24	9	8	7	37	32	35
Sevilla	24	8	8	8	19	18	32
Barcelona	24	8	7	9	37	32	31
Villarreal	24	8	7	9	24	28	31
Valladolid	24	9	3	12	25	28	30
Athletic Bilbao	24	8	6	10	37	41	30
Racing Santander	24	9	2	13	30	31	29
Malaga	24	6	10	8	30	31	28
Osasuna	24	7	7	10	26	31	28
Mallorca	24	8	4	12	26	40	28
Alaves	24	7	7	10	28	44	28
Espanyol	24	7	4	13	26	34	25
Rayo Vallecano	24	6	4	14	23	38	22
Recreativo	24	5	6	13	24	47	21

LEADING GOALSCORERS

19	Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
13	Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
12	Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)
12	Nihat Kahveci (Real Sociedad)

SPANISH CUP – semi-finals

2nd legs
Mar 5: Mallorca 1 Deportivo La Coruna 1 *Mallorca 4-3 on agg*; Osasuna 2 Recreativo 2 *Recreativo 4-2 on agg.*

SWITZERLAND

CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

Mar 1: Neuchatel Xamax 3 Basle 1.
Mar 2: Thun 1 Wil 1900 1; Grasshopper 4 Young Boys 0.

SWITZERLAND – CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	1	1	0	0	4	0	28 [25]
Basle	1	0	0	1	1	3	24 [24]
Neuchatel X	1	1	0	0	3	1	19 [16]
Thun	1	0	1	0	1	1	17 [16]
Wil 1900	1	0	1	0	1	1	17 [16]
Zurich	0	0	0	0	0	0	16 [16]
Young Boys	1	0	0	1	0	4	15 [15]
Servette	0	0	0	0	0	0	15 [15]

Teams carried forward half their points (figure in brackets) from regular season

TURKEY

Feb 8: Goztepe 0 Altay 2; Kocaelispor 0 Besiktas 5; Gaziantepspor 3 Malatyaspor 0; Bursaspor 2 Samsunspor 1.
Feb 9: Diyarbakirspor 2 Adanaspor 0; Trabzonspor 1 Elazigspor 1; Ankaragucu 0 Fenerbahce 0; Istanbulspor 1 Genclerbirligi 3.
Feb 15: Malatyaspor 2 Denizlispor 1; Samsunspor 1 Kocaelispor 0; Fenerbahce 2 Gaziantepspor 0.
Feb 16: Elazigspor 1 Ankaragucu 0; Genclerbirligi 3 Diyarbakirspor 1; Bursaspor 0 Galatasaray 4; Adanaspor 1 Goztepe 2; Besiktas 2 Istanbulspor 1; Altay 1 Trabzonspor 4.
Feb 22: Goztepe 0 Genclerbirligi 0; Trabzonspor 3 Adanaspor 1.
Feb 23: Ankaragucu 3 Altay 0; Galatasaray 2 Malatyaspor 1; Istanbulspor 0 Samsunspor 1.
Feb 28: Fenerbahce 2 Malatyaspor 0.
Mar 1: Kocaelispor 0 Galatasaray 1; Altay 0 Gaziantepspor 0; Bursaspor 1 Istanbulspor 2; Genclerbirligi 2 Trabzonspor 1.
Mar 2: Adanaspor 0 Ankaragucu 2; Elazigspor 0 Denizlispor 2; Samsunspor 3 Diyarbakirspor 1; Besiktas 7 Goztepe 3.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	21	16	5	0	43	13	53
Galatasaray	21	15	3	3	35	18	48
Genclerbirligi	22	14	5	3	55	23	47
Fenerbahce	21	12	6	3	43	21	42
Trabzonspor	22	10	7	5	31	19	37
Gaziantepspor	21	9	7	5	34	24	34
Malatyaspor	22	8	7	7	35	30	31
Ankaragucu	22	9	3	10	28	28	30
Denizlispor	20	7	6	7	23	22	27
Samsunspor	22	7	4	11	24	38	25
Diyarbakirspor	21	6	5	10	21	30	23
Istanbulspor	22	6	4	12	25	35	22
Altay	22	6	4	12	28	46	22
Elazigspor	21	5	5	11	20	31	20
Goztepe	22	4	8	10	22	38	20
Bursaspor	21	4	7	10	26	40	19
Adanaspor	22	4	7	11	21	38	19
Kocaelispor	21	4	1	16	20	40	13

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

1st rnd

Group 1

Feb 18 - Asuncion
Libertad (Par) 2 (Martinez 58, Cohener 79)
Emelec (Ecu) 2 (Tenorio 9, 43)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

Feb 19 - Cali
Deportivo Cali (Col) 2 (Murillo 35, Castillo 60)
River Plate (Arg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)

Feb 25 - Guayaquil
Emelec 0
Deportivo Cali 4 (Castillo 22, 63, Hernandez 49, Patino 69)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Aros (Chl)

Feb 27 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 3 (Fuertes 66, pen 83, Gonzalez 76)
Libertad 1 (Benitez 64)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Souza Mendonca (Bra)
Sent off: Benitez (Libertad) 80min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Deportivo Cali	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
River Plate	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Libertad	2	0	1	1	3	5	1
Emelec	2	0	1	1	2	6	1

Tue, Mar 11: Deportivo Cali v Libertad
Thu, Mar 13: Emelec v River Plate
Tue, Mar 18: Emelec v Libertad
Thu, Mar 20: River Plate v Deportivo Cali
Tue, Apr 1: Deportivo Cali v Emelec
Wed, Apr 2: Libertad v River Plate
Thu, Apr 17: Libertad v Deportivo Cali
Thu, Apr 17: River Plate v Emelec

Group 2

Feb 13 - Lima
Sporting Cristal (Per) 0
Paysandu (Bra) 2 (Robson 47, Sandro 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Paneso (Col)

Feb 19 - Santiago
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 0
Sporting Cristal 1 (Maestri 6)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Paniagua (Bol)

Mar 6 - Belem
Paysandu 0
Cerro Porteno (Par) 0
Ref: Solorzano (Ven)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paysandu	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Cerro Porteno	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Sporting Cristal	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
U Catolica	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Tue, Mar 11: Paysandu v Universidad Catolica
Wed, Mar 12: Sporting Cristal v Cerro Porteno
Tue, Mar 18: Universidad Catolica v Cerro Porteno
Tue, Mar 18: Paysandu v Sporting Cristal
Thu, Mar 27: Cerro Porteno v Paysandu
Thu, Mar 27: Sporting Cristal v Universidad Catolica
Tue, Apr 15: Cerro Porteno v Sporting Cristal
Tue, Apr 15: Universidad Catolica v Paysandu

Group 3

Feb 20 - Santos
Santos (Bra) 3 (Elano 17, Ricardo Oliveira pen 63, Nene 71)
12 de Octubre (Par) 1 (Bareiro 3)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)

Feb 26 - Quito
El Nacional (Ecu) 1 (Gruezo 47)
America (Col) 1 (J A Moreno 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)

Mar 4 - Cali
America 4 (Vasquez 33, 46, 74, L F Moreno 38)
12 de Octubre 1 (R Gomez 66)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Rivera (Per)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	2	2	0	0	8	2	6
America	3	1	1	1	6	7	4
12 de Octubre	3	1	0	2	5	8	3
El Nacional	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Wed, Mar 12: El Nacional v Santos
Wed, Mar 19: El Nacional v 12 de Octubre
Wed, Mar 19: Santos v America
Tue, Mar 25: 12 de Octubre v Santos
Thu, Mar 27: America v El Nacional
Wed, Apr 16: 12 de Octubre v America
Wed, Apr 16: Santos v El Nacional

Group 4

Feb 11 - Lima
Alianza Lima (Per) 1 (Soto pen 66)
Olimpia (Par) 1 (Lopez 16)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Alves da Costa (Olimpia) 23min

Feb 12 - Calama
Cobreloa (Chl) 0
Gimnasia LP (Arg) 0
Ref: Oliveira (Bra)

Feb 20 - Asuncion
Olimpia 0
Cobreloa 0
Ref: Larrionda (Uru)
Sent off: B Gonzalez (Cobreloa) 65min

Feb 26 - La Plata
Gimnasia LP 5 (Gonzalez 7, Enria 30, 41, Lobos 40, Sosa 43)
Alianza Lima 1 (Olcese 34)
HT: 5-1. **Ref:** Almeida (Bra)

Mar 4 - La Plata
Gimnasia LP 1 (Lobos 13)
Olimpia 1 (Lopez 89)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)

Mar 5 - Lima
Alianza Lima 2 (Tagliani 15, 68)
Cobreloa 3 (Martel 31, 65, Cornejo 90)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Duque (Col)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gimnasia LP	3	1	2	0	6	2	5
Cobreloa	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Olimpia	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Alianza Lima	3	0	1	2	4	9	1

Wed, Mar 19: Gimnasia LP v Cobreloa
Thu, Mar 20: Olimpia v Alianza Lima
Tue, Mar 25: Cobreloa v Olimpia
Wed, Mar 26: Alianza Lima v Gimnasia LP
Tue, Apr 8: Cobreloa v Alianza Lima
Tue, Apr 8: Olimpia v Gimnasia LP

Group 5

Feb 11 - Mexico City
Pumas UNAM (Mex) 2 (L I Gonzalez 32, J L Lopez 65)
Bolivar (Bol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Carpio (Ecu)
Sent off: Cabrera (Bolivar) 43min

Feb 18 - Montevideo
Penarol (Uru) 2 (Pacheco 87, Cedres 90)
Gremio (Bra) 2 (Anderson 60, Douglas 77)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)

Feb 25 - La Paz
Bolivar 5 (Botero 8, 40, 79, Gutierrez 44, Sandy 82)
Penarol 2 (Rotundo 17, Bueno 20)
HT: 3-2. **Ref:** Gimenez (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gremio	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Bolivar	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
Pumas UNAM	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Penarol	2	0	1	1	4	7	1

Tue, Mar 11: Penarol v Pumas UNAM
Thu, Mar 13: Gremio v Bolivar
Tue, Mar 18: Penarol v Bolivar
Thu, Mar 20: Pumas UNAM v Gremio
Tue, Mar 26: Bolivar v Pumas UNAM
Tue, Apr 1: Gremio v Penarol
Thu, Apr 10: Bolivar v Gremio
Thu, Apr 10: Pumas UNAM v Penarol

Group 6

Feb 18 - Lima
Universitario (Per) 1 (Artigas 4)
Racing Club (Arg) 1 (Pumar og 7)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Reinoso (Ecu)

Feb 25 - Montevideo
Nacional (Uru) 1 (Peralta 62)
Racing Club 2 (Rueda 60, Mirosevic 67)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)

Feb 26 - Lima
Universitario 2 (Artigas pen 30, Huaman 65)
Oriente Petrolero (Bol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)
Sent off: Dominguez (Universitario) 72min

Mar 6 - Santa Cruz
Oriente Petrolero 2 (Biaggio 51, Justiniano 75)
Nacional 3 (Eguren 35, Alvez 54, Munua pen 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Universitario	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Racing Club	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Nacional	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Oriente	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

Wed, Mar 12: Racing Club v Oriente Petrolero
Wed, Mar 19: Nacional v Universitario
Tue, Mar 25: Racing Club v Universitario
Tue, Apr 1: Nacional v Oriente Petrolero
Tue, Apr 8: Oriente Petrolero v Universitario
Wed, Apr 9: Racing Club v Nacional

Wed, Apr 16: Oriente Petrolero v Racing Club
Wed, Apr 16: Universitario v Nacional

Group 7

Feb 20 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors (Arg) 2 (Gonzalez 51, Delgado 86)
Independiente Medellin (Col) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rezende (Bra)
Sent off: Barros Schelotto (Boca) 38min; Baloy (Independiente) 38min

Feb 26 - Santiago
Colo Colo (Chl) 1 (Espina pen 75)
Boca Juniors 2 (Moreno pen 38, 88)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Par)

Feb 27 - Medellin
Independiente Medellin 1 (Restrepo 7)
Barcelona (Ecu) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Brand (Ven)

Mar 5 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 2 (Barros Schelotto 6, Delgado 69)
Barcelona 1 (Graziani 90)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)

Mar 6 - Santiago
Colo Colo 2 (Neira 23, Espina 53)
Independiente Medellin 1 (Moreno 38)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Barcelona	3	1	0	2	3	3	3
Colo Colo	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Indep Medellin	3	1	0	2	2	4	3

Thu, Mar 13: Colo Colo v Barcelona
Wed, Mar 26: Independiente Medellin v Boca Juniors
Thu, Apr 3: Boca Juniors v Colo Colo
Thu, Apr 3: Barcelona v Independiente Medellin
Thu, Apr 10: Independiente Medellin v Colo Colo
Thu, Apr 10: Barcelona v Boca Juniors

Group 8

Feb 18 - Mexico City
Cruz Azul (Mex) 3 (Abreu 16, 79, Baldi 75)
The Strongest (Bol) 2 (Cabrera 40, Ribera 90)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Lecca (Per)

Feb 19 - Montevideo
Fenix (Uru) 1 (Campora 17)
Corinthians (Bra) 2 (Fabio Luciano 16, Jorge Wagner 36)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Fumagalli (Corinthians) 90min

Feb 27 - La Paz
The Strongest 1 (Ledezma 61)
Fenix 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Madorran (Arg)

Mar 5 - Montevideo
Fenix 6 (Liguera 45, 72, 74, Campora 52, Hornos 77, Cortes 90)
Cruz Azul 1 (Abreu 16)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Brazenas (Arg)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Fenix	3	1	0	2	7	4	3
The Strongest	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Cruz Azul	3	1	0	2	4	9	3

Tue, Mar 11: Corinthians v The Strongest
Thu, Mar 20: Fenix v The Strongest
Wed, Mar 26: Cruz Azul v Corinthians
Wed, Apr 2: Corinthians v Fenix
Thu, Apr 3: The Strongest v Cruz Azul
Wed, Apr 9: Cruz Azul v Fenix
Wed, Apr 9: The Strongest v Corinthians

Top two from each group qualify for second round

2nd rnd

Group 8 2nd v Group 1 1st (A)
Group 7 2nd v Group 2 1st (B)
Group 6 2nd v Group 3 1st (C)
Group 5 2nd v Group 4 1st (D)
Group 4 2nd v Group 5 1st (E)
Group 3 2nd v Group 6 1st (F)
Group 2 2nd v Group 7 1st (G)
Group 1 2nd v Group 8 1st (H)
1st legs, April 23; 2nd legs, April 30

Quarter-finals

Winners A v Winners C (Q1)
Winners D v Winners B (Q2)
Winners E v Winners G (Q3)
Winners H v Winners F (Q4)
1st legs, May 21; 2nd legs, May 28

Semi-finals

Winners Q1 v Winners Q3
Winners Q2 v Winners Q4
1st legs, June 4/11; 2nd legs, June 11/18

Final

1st leg, June 25; 2nd leg, July 2

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, February 14

Racing Club 1 (Lobos og 90)
Huracan 0

Saturday, February 15

Banfield 2 (Moreno y Fabianesi 17, 53)
Union Santa Fe 2 (Leguizamon 10, Weisheim 82)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Piccolli 4, Carignano 78)
Estudiantes 0

Olimpo 1 (Dominguez 24)
Arsenal 1 (Piersimone 17)

San Lorenzo 2 (Saja pen 50, Michelini 84)
Rosario Central 2 (Figueroa 64, Carbonari 78)

Sunday, February 16

Boca Juniors 2 (Gonzalez 29, Donnet 80)
Nueva Chicago 0

Gimnasia LP 1 (Enria 87)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Gonzalez 51)

Lanus 1 (Moreno pen 45)
Independiente 0

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Rosales 62, Marino 83)
River Plate 2 (Fuertes 76, Ameli 90)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Nanni pen 6)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Friday, February 21

Independiente 0
Gimnasia LP 3 (Sosa 17, San Esteban pen 54, Enria 88)

Saturday, February 22

Arsenal 0
Racing Club 1 (Milito 67)

Huracan 1 (Lopez Rojas 90)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Rosales 62)

Rosario Central 1 (Ferrari 62)
Lanus 0

Talleres Cordoba 0
Olimpo 2 (Castillo 19, Laspada 74)

Sunday, February 23

Chacarita Juniors 0
Colon Santa Fe 0

Estudiantes 2 (Farias 61, 89)
Banfield 0

Nueva Chicago 2 (Tilger 15, Arguello pen 89)
San Lorenzo 2 (Michelini 19, Rodriguez 56)

River Plate 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Nanni 90)

Union Santa Fe 2 (Islas 61, 65)
Boca Juniors 0

Friday, February 28

San Lorenzo 0
Union Santa Fe 2 (Islas 25, Leguizamon 90)

Saturday, March 1

Olimpo 3 (Carrario 24, Gonzalez 45, Dominguez 48)
Independiente 0

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Nanni 25, Gutierrez 70)
Huracan 0

Sunday, March 2

Boca Juniors 3 (Barros Schelotto pen 58, 67, Moreno 90)
Banfield 1 (Bilos 14)

Chacarita Juniors 0
Estudiantes 1 (Pompei 89)

Colon Santa Fe 0
River Plate 2 (Cavenaghi 61, Gonzalez 76)

Gimnasia LP 0
Rosario Central 4 (Delgado 5, Figueroa 62, 77, 90)

Lanus 1 (Mannara 20)
Nueva Chicago 2 (Poli 38, Arguello 56)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Silvani pen 31, Ponzio 89)
Arsenal 0

Racing Club 2 (Milito 56, Rueda 86)
Talleres Cordoba 0

ARGENTINA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Racing Club	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
Velez Sarsfield	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
Rosario Central	3	2	1	0	7	2	7
Olimpo	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Union Santa Fe	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Boca Juniors	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Estudiantes	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Newell's OB	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
River Plate	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Colon Santa Fe	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Gimnasia LP	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Nueva Chicago	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Lanus	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
San Lorenzo	3	0	2	1	4	6	2
Chacarita Jnrs	3	0	1	2	0	2	1
Arsenal	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Huracan	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
Banfield	3	0	1	2	3	7	1
Talleres Cordoba	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Independiente	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

LEADING GOALSCORERS
4 Luciano Figueroa (Rosario Central)
3 Pablo Islas (Union Santa Fe)
3 Roberto Nanni (Velez Sarsfield)

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 8: Santiago Wanderers 5 U de Concepcion 2; Coquimbo Unido 1 Rangers 1; Cobreloa 4 U de Chile 1; Puerto Montt 1 Palestino 0.
Feb 9: Dep Temuco 1 U Catolica 1; San Felipe 1 Cobresal 0; Huachipato 1 Union Espanola 2; Colo Colo 6 Audax Italiano 4.
Feb 14: U de Concepcion 1 Puerto Montt 3.
Feb 15: Coquimbo Unido 2 San Felipe 1; Rangers 1 Cobreloa 1; Palestino 4 Dep Temuco 0; U Catolica 3 Huachipato 2; Union Espanola 0 Colo Colo 2.
Feb 16: Audax Italiano 2 Cobresal 1; U de Chile 4 Santiago Wanderers 1.
Feb 22: Colo Colo 1 U Catolica 1; San Felipe 0 Audax Italiano 4; Santiago Wanderers 2 Rangers 2.
Feb 23: Dep Temuco 0 U de Concepcion 1; Cobresal 5 Union Espanola 1; Cobreloa 1 Coquimbo Unido 0; Puerto Montt 1 U de Chile 1; Huachipato 4 Palestino 2.
Mar 1: Cobreloa 3 San Felipe 0; Union Espanola 1 Audax Italiano 3; U de Chile 6 Dep Temuco 0; Coquimbo Unido 0 Santiago Wanderers 2.
Mar 2: U Catolica 0 Cobresal 0; U de Concepcion 0 Huachipato 0; Palestino 0 Colo Colo 2; Rangers 4 Puerto Montt 0.

CHILE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Huachipato	4	1	1	2	7	7	4
Palestino	4	1	0	3	6	7	3
Union Espanola	4	1	0	3	4	11	3

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	4	2	1	1	12	6	7
Puerto Montt	4	2	1	1	5	6	7
Coquimbo Unido	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
San Felipe	4	1	0	3	2	9	3

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	4	3	0	1	13	8	9
Sant Wanderers	4	2	1	1	10	8	7
Rangers	4	1	3	0	8	4	6
Cobresal	4	1	1	2	6	4	4

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	4	3	1	0	11	5	10
U Catolica	4	1	3	0	5	4	6
U de Concepcion	4	1	1	2	4	8	4
Dep Temuco	4	0	1	3	1	12	1

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 9: Millonarios 2 Indep Santa Fe 2; Once Caldas 2 Magdalena 1; America 3 Indep Medellin 1; At Huila 1 Dep Pasto 0; At Nacional 1 Dep Cali 0; Tulua 1 Bucaramanga 1; At Junior 2 Pereira 1.
Feb 13: Envigado 1 Quindio 0.
Feb 16: Pereira 2 Indep Santa Fe 0; Bucaramanga 2 At Junior 0; Dep Cali 2 Tulua 0; Dep Pasto 1 At Nacional 0; Tolima 3 At Huila 1; Indep Medellin 1 Centauros 1; Quindio 2 America 4; Magdalena 2 Envigado 0; Millonarios 0 Once Caldas 0.
Feb 19: Indep Santa Fe 1 Once Caldas 0; America 6 Magdalena 2; At Nacional 1 Tolima 0; Tulua 2 Dep Pasto 0; Centauros 2 Quindio 0; Pereira 3 Bucaramanga 3.
Feb 22: Dep Cali 3 Pereira 3.
Feb 23: Bucaramanga 1 Indep Santa Fe 1; Dep Pasto 0 At Junior 1; Tolima 0 Tulua 0; Quindio 1 At Huila 1; Magdalena 0 Centauros 1; Millonarios 3 America 0; Once Caldas 1 Envigado 0.
Mar 1: America 1 Once Caldas 1.
Mar 2: Indep Santa Fe 0 Envigado 0; Centauros 1 Millonarios 1; At Huila 2 Magdalena 2; At Nacional 3 Quindio 0; Tulua 0 Indep Medellin 4; At Junior 2 Tolima 1; Pereira 0 Dep Pasto 2; Bucaramanga 1 Dep Cali 1.

COLOMBIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	5	3	1	1	14	9	10
Bucaramanga	6	2	4	0	10	7	10
At Nacional	5	3	0	2	6	3	9
At Junior	5	3	0	2	5	5	9
Millonarios	5	2	3	0	8	4	9
Centauros	5	2	3	0	6	3	9
Indep Santa Fe	6	2	3	1	5	5	9
Dep Cali	5	2	2	1	8	6	8
Once Caldas	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Dep Pasto	6	2	1	3	4	5	7
Envigado	5	2	1	2	3	4	7
Pereira	6	1	3	2	9	10	6
Tulua	6	1	3	2	3	7	6
At Huila	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Indep Medellin	4	1	1	2	7	6	4
Tolima	4	1	1	2	4	4	4
Union Magdalena	6	1	1	4	8	13	4
Quindio	5	0	1	4	3	11	1

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 2: Dep Cuenca 4 Espoli 1; Emelec 2 Manta 0; Aucas 1 LDU Quito 2; Tecnico Universitario 0 El Nacional 1.

ECUADOR – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cuenca	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Emelec	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
LDU Quito	1	1	0	0	2	1	3
El Nacional	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Barcelona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dep Quito	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aucas	1	0	0	1	1	2	0
Tecnico Univ	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Manta	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Espoli	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 14: Libertad 3 12 de Octubre 0.
Feb 16: San Lorenzo 1 Olimpia 3; Sol de America 2 Cerro Porteno 0; Sport Colombia 2 Sportivo Luqueno 1; Guarani 3 Tacuary 2.
Feb 21: Sportivo Luqueno 0 Sol de America 0.
Feb 22: Tacuary 0 Libertad 2.
Feb 23: Guarani 2 San Lorenzo 1; 12 de Octubre 4 Sport Colombia 2; Cerro Porteno 1 Olimpia 1.
Feb 28: Olimpia 2 Sportivo Luqueno 0; Sol de America 1 12 de Octubre 1.
Mar 2: Sport Colombia 1 Tacuary 2; Libertad 2 Guarani 1.

PARAGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Olimpia	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
Guarani	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Sol de America	3	1	2	0	3	1	5
12 de Octubre	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Sport Colombia	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Tacuary	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Cerro Porteno	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Sportivo Luqueno	3	0	1	2	1	4	1
San Lorenzo	2	0	0	2	2	5	0

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 1: Sporting Cristal 2 Coronel Bolognesi 0.
Mar 2: Universitario 1 Cienciano 3; Estudiantes 3 Sport Boys 2; Union Huaral 3 At Universidad 2; Melgar 3 Alianza Atletico 1; Dep Wanka 0 Alianza Lima 2.

PERU – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cienciano	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Melgar	1	1	0	0	3	1	3
Alianza Lima	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Sporting Cristal	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Estudiantes	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
Union Huaral	1	1	0	0	3	2	3
At Universidad	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Sport Boys	1	0	0	1	2	3	0
Alianza Atletico	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Universitario	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Coronel Bolognesi	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Dep Wanka	1	0	0	1	0	2	0

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 21: Penarol 2 Defensor 1.
Feb 22: Tacuarembo 1 Nacional 1; Dep Maldonado 2 Central Espanol 0.
Feb 23: Dep Colonia 0 River Plate 2; Liverpool 0 Miramar Misiones 0; Wanderers 1 Bella Vista M 1; Juventud 0 Danubio 2; Cerro 1 Villa Espanola 0; Fenix 3 Plaza 1.
Feb 28: Juventud 0 Dep Maldonado 0.
Mar 1: Wanderers 3 Villa Espanola 2; Plaza 0 Penarol 2.
Mar 2: Miramar Misiones 4 Dep Colonia 0; Liverpool 0 Tacuarembo 3; Nacional 1 River Plate 0; Bella Vista M 0 Cerro 0; Danubio 3 Central Espanol 0; Fenix 3 Defensor 2.

URUGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Danubio	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Fenix	2	2	0	0	6	3	6
Penarol	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Miramar Misiones	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Tacuarembo	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Dep Maldonado	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Wanderers	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Nacional	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Cerro	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
River Plate	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Bella Vista M	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Juventud	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Liverpool	2	0	1	1	0	3	1
Defensor	2	0	0	2	3	5	0
Villa Espanola	2	0	0	2	2	4	0
Plaza	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
Central Espanol	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
Dep Colonia	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 1: Estudiantes 4 Trujillanos 1.
Mar 2: Ital-Chacao 2 Maracaibo 2; Mineros Guayana 0 Nacional 1; Carabobo 0 Caracas 0.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Estudiantes	1	1	0	0	4	1	3
Nacional	1	1	0	0	1	0	3
Ital-Chacao	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Maracaibo	1	0	1	0	2	2	1
Carabobo	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Caracas	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dep Tachira	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monagas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mineros Guayana	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Trujillanos	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Feb 8: Veracruz 1 Toluca 0; Monterrey 1 Colibries 0; Morelia 2 Gallos Blancos 1.
Feb 9: San Luis 2 Cruz Azul 2; Pachuca 1 Tigres 1; Guadalajara 3 Tecos UAG 2; Atlante 3 Puebla 1; Necaxa 0 America 2; Santos 1 Jaguares 2.
Feb 15: Toluca 3 Monterrey 1; Colibries 2 Pachuca 3; Jaguares 0 Necaxa 0; Tigres 1 Guadalajara 0; Cruz Azul 2 Santos 2; Atlas 3 Veracruz 0.
Feb 16: Puebla 1 Morelia 6; Gallos Blancos 0 Pumas UNAM 0; America 1 Atlante 0; Tecos UAG 1 San Luis 2.
Feb 22: Veracruz 1 Gallos Blancos 1; Toluca 4 Colibries 1; Monterrey 2 Atlas 2; Morelia 1 America 2; San Luis 2 Tigres 0.
Feb 23: Guadalajara 3 Pachuca 1; Atlante 5 Jaguares 1; Santos 3 Tecos UAG 1; Necaxa 4 Cruz Azul 0; Pumas UNAM 1 Puebla 0.
Feb 26: Pumas UNAM 2 Atlas 1; Colibries 1 Guadalajara 1; Jaguares 1 Morelia 2; Tigres 2 Santos 2; Cruz Azul 1 Atlante 3; Atlas 1 Toluca 1.
Mar 2: Gallos Blancos 1 Monterrey 1; Puebla 0 Veracruz 1; Pachuca 2 San Luis 2; Tecos UAG 1 Necaxa 2; America 1 Pumas UNAM 1.

MEXICO – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	8	4	2	2	12	6	14
Toluca	8	3	2	3	16	12	11
Atlas	8	3	2	3	12	11	11
Colibries	8	3	1	4	12	11	10
Puebla	8	1	1	6	5	15	4

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	8	4	3	1	15	12	15
Tigres	8	4	2	2	11	8	14
Pachuca	8	2	5	1	10	10	11
Pumas UNAM	8	2	3	3	8	13	9
Tecos UAG	8	0	2	6	6	15	2

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Necaxa	8	5	1	2	11	4	16
Morelia	8	4	1	3	16	12	13
San Luis	8	3	3	2	11	13	12
Jaguares	8	2	2	4	7	14	8
Cruz Azul	8	0	5	3	9	17	5

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadalajara	8	4	3	1	15	10	15
Atlante	8	4	1	3	17	12	13
Santos	8	3	3	2	13	9	12
Veracruz	8	3	2	3	6	8	11
Gallos Blancos	8	2	4	2	6	6	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Sebastian Gonzalez (Atlante)
8 Sebastian Abreu (Cruz Azul)
8 Jose Cardozo (Toluca)

AFRICA

AFRICAN SUPER CUP

Feb 7 - Cairo
Zamalek (Egy) 3 (Abdel Wahed 29, Emam 63, Ali 65)
Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 1 (Dah Zady 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Guirat (Tun)
Zamalek: A El-Sayed - El-Quabbani, Abdelhadi, El-Tbay, T El-Sayed, Tamer Abdel Hamied, Emam (Kamouna 83), Abdel Wahed, Saleh, Hamza (Chikabala 79), Ali (El-Ghandour 89).
Wydad: El-Jarmouni - Talha, Abrami, Louissi, Khamma, Ait Laarif, Madihi (El-Janabi 46), Kassab, Allali (Dah Zady 73), Gosso-Gosso, Lafaoui.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Preliminary rnd, 1st legs

Feb 15: La Passe (Sey) 1 AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs) 0; FC Nouadhibou (Mra) 2 AS Niamey (Ngr) 1; Red Sea (Eri) 2 Nzoia Sugar (Ken) 0; SC Villa (Uga) 4 Muzinga (Brd) 1.
Feb 16: AS Adema (Mad) 1 St Louisienne (Reu) 0; Ela Nguema (EqG) 0 AS Douanes (Tog) 0; Simba SC (Tan) 1 Botswana Defence Force XI (Bot) 0; St George (Eth) 1 Rayon Sport (Rwa) 3; Wallidan (Gam) 1 Dragons l'Oueme (Ben) 0.

Preliminary rnd, 2nd legs

Mar 1: AS Niamey 1 FC Nouadhibou 0 *Agg 2-2. AS Niamey on away goals*; AS Port Louis 2000 2 La Passe 0 *AS Port Louis 2-1 on agg*; Botswana Defence Force XI 1 Simba SC 3 *Simba SC 4-1 on agg*; St Louisienne 3 AS Adema 0 *St Louisienne 3-1 on agg.*
Mar 2: AS Douanes 1 Ela Nguema 0 *AS Douanes 1-0 on agg*; Dragons l'Oueme 0 Wallidan 0 *Wallidan 1-0 on agg*; Muzinga 1 SC Villa 0 *SC Villa 4-2 on agg*; Nzoia Sugar 2 Red Sea 0 *Agg 2-2. Nzoia Sugar 4-3 on pens*; Rayon Sport 0 St George 1 *Rayon Sport 3-2 on agg.*

1st rnd draw

USM Alger (Alg) v Wallidan
Stade Malien (Mli) v AS Police (Con)
Canon Yaounde (Cam) v Al Merreikh (Sud)
FC St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) v US Mbila Nziami (Gab)
ASEC Abidjan (IvC) v AS Niamey
Hassania Agadir (Mor) v Al Ittihad (Lby)
Hearts of Oak (Gha) v AS Douanes
AS Aviacao (Ang) v SC Villa
Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) v ASFA Yenenga (BuF)
Enyimba (Nig) v Satellite (Gui)
Esperance (Tun) v Rayon Sport
Highlanders (Zim) v St Louisienne
Zamalek (Egy) v Nzoia Sugar
Santos (SAf) v Simba SC
Ismaili (Egy) v Zanaco (Zam)
Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) v AS Port Louis 2000

1st legs, April 11-13; 2nd legs, April 25-27

CUP-WINNERS CUP

Preliminary rnd, 1st legs

Feb 16: JS Pobe (Ben) 1 AS Agadez (Ngr) 0; Lesotho Defence Force (Les) 2 Jomo Cosmos (SAf) 2; Olympique Moka (Mrs) 3 AS Fortior (Mad) 1.

Anse Reunion (Sey) v Masvingo (Zim) – Masvingo withdrew; Anse walkover

Preliminary rnd, 2nd legs

Mar 2: AS Agadez 0 JS Pobe 1 *JS Pobe 2-0 on agg*; AS Fortior 1 Olympique Moka 0 *Olympique Moka 3-2 on agg*; Jomo Cosmos 5 Lesotho Defence Force 1 *Jomo Cosmos 7-3 on agg.*

1st rnd draw

Kenya Pipeline (Ken) v Anse Reunion
Power Dynamos (Zam) v Olympique Moka
Mount Cameroon (Cam) v Akonangui (EqG)
*Asante Kotoko (Gha) v Mighty Blue Angels (Lbr)
US Kenya (DRC) v APR FC (Rwa)
Etoile du Congo (Con) v Petro Atletico (Ang)
Africa Sports (IvC) v Dyto de Lome (Tog)
Maghreb Fes (Mor) v Hafia (Gui)
Widad Tlemcan (Alg) v Al Hilal (Lby)
Wydad Casablanca (Mor) v ASC Nasr de Sebkha (Mra)
Baladeyet Al Mehaila (Egy) v Police FC (Uga)
Insurance (Eth) v Al Hilal (Sud)
Costa do Sol (Moz) v Jomo Cosmos
Julius Berger (Nig) v Jeunesse Sportive (Gab)
Etoile Sahel (Tun) v JS Pobe
AS Douanes (Sen) v Club Olympique (Mli)

**Mighty Blue Angels disqualified for failing to meet player licence submission deadline; Asante Kotoko walkover*

1st legs, April 11-13; 2nd legs, April 25-27

CAF CUP

1st rnd draw

St Michel United (Sey) v Dominan'i Soavina Atsimondrano (Mad)
Green Buffaloes (Zam) v Express (Uga)
Maxaquene (Moz) v Black Rhinos (Zim)
Khartoum (Sud) v Kiyovu Sport (Rwa)
Coffee FC (Eth) v Anassar (Lby)
AS Kaloum (Gui) v AS Sonacos (Sen)
Etoile Filante (BuF) v Raja Casablanca (Mor)
FC 105 Libreville (Gab) v Djoliba (Mli)
Requins Atlantique (Ben) v Club Africain (Tun)
CS La Mancha (Con) v JCA (IvC)
Cotonsport (Cam) v Maranatha de Fiokpo (Tog)
Primeiro Agosto (Ang) v Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf)
Daring Club Motema Pembe (DRC) v Renacimiento (EqG)
Enugu Rangers (Nig) v LISCR (Lbr)

1st legs, April 11-14; 2nd legs, April 25-27

Byes: JS Kabylie (Alg), Al Ahly (Egy)

ASIA

FAR EAST CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

In Tokyo

Feb 16: Jubilo Iwata (Jap) 0 Songnam Chunma (SKo) 2; Dalian Shide (Chn) 1 Kashima Antlers (Jap) 3.
Feb 19: Songnam Chunma 2 Dalian Shide 3; Jubilo Iwata 0 Kashima Antlers 2.
Feb 22: Kashima Antlers 0 Songnam Chunma 0; Dalian Shide 1 Jubilo Iwata 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kashima Antlers	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Dalian Shide	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
Songnam Ch'ma	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Jubilo Iwata	3	0	0	3	0	5	0

EURO 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 1

France, Slovenia, Israel, Cyprus, Malta

07.09.02 .....Cyprus-France 1-2
07.09.02 .....Slovenia-Malta.....3-0
12.10.02 .....France-Slovenia.....5-0
12.10.02 .....Malta-Israel.....0-2
16.10.02 .....Malta-France 0-4
20.11.02 .....Cyprus-Malta 2-1
29.03.03 .....Cyprus-Israel
29.03.03 .....France-Malta
02.04.03 .....Israel-France
02.04.03 .....Slovenia-Cyprus
30.04.03 .....Israel-Cyprus
30.04.03 .....Malta-Slovenia
07.06.03 .....Israel-Slovenia
07.06.03 .....Malta-Cyprus
06.09.03 .....France-Cyprus
06.09.03 .....Slovenia-Israel
10.09.03 .....Israel-Malta
10.09.03 .....Slovenia-France
11.10.03 .....Cyprus-Slovenia
11.10.03 .....France-Israel

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	3	3	0	0	11	1	9
Israel	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Cyprus	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Slovenia	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
Malta	4	0	0	4	1	11	0

Group 2

Romania, Denmark, Norway, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Luxembourg

07.09.02 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Romania 0-3
07.09.02 .....Norway-Denmark.....2-2
12.10.02 .....Denmark-Luxembourg 2-0
12.10.02 .....Romania-Norway 0-1
16.10.02 .....Luxembourg-Romania 0-7
16.10.02 .....Norway-Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-0
29.03.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Luxembourg
29.03.03 .....Romania-Denmark
02.04.03 .....Denmark-Bosnia-Herzegovina
02.04.03 .....Luxembourg-Norway
07.06.03 .....Denmark-Norway
07.06.03 .....Romania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.06.03 .....Luxembourg-Denmark
11.06.03 .....Norway-Romania
06.09.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Norway
06.09.03 .....Romania-Luxembourg
10.09.03 .....Denmark-Romania
10.09.03 .....Luxembourg-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.10.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Denmark
11.10.03 .....Norway-Luxembourg

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Romania	3	2	0	1	10	1	6
Denmark	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Bosnia-Herz	2	0	0	2	0	5	0
Luxembourg	2	0	0	2	0	9	0

Group 3

Czech Republic, Holland, Austria, Belarus, Moldova

07.09.02 .....Austria-Moldova.....2-0
07.09.02 .....Holland-Belarus 3-0
12.10.02 .....Belarus-Austria 0-2
12.10.02 .....Moldova-Czech Republic 0-2
16.10.02 .....Austria-Holland 0-3
16.10.02 .....Czech Republic-Belarus.....2-0
29.03.03 .....Belarus-Moldova
29.03.03 .....Holland-Czech Republic
02.04.03 .....Czech Republic-Austria
02.04.03 .....Moldova-Holland
07.06.03 .....Belarus-Holland
07.06.03 .....Moldova-Austria
11.06.03 .....Austria-Belarus
11.06.03 .....Czech Republic-Moldova
06.09.03 .....Belarus-Czech Republic
06.09.03 .....Holland-Austria
10.09.03 .....Czech Republic-Holland
10.09.03 .....Moldova-Belarus
11.10.03 .....Austria-Czech Republic
11.10.03 .....Holland-Moldova

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Czech Republic	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Austria	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Moldova	2	0	0	2	0	4	0
Belarus	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

Group 4

Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, San Marino

07.09.02 .....Latvia-Sweden.....0-0
07.09.02 .....San Marino-Poland 0-2
12.10.02 .....Poland-Latvia.....0-1
12.10.02 .....Sweden-Hungary 1-1
16.10.02 .....Hungary-San Marino.....3-0
20.11.02 .....San Marino-Latvia.....0-1
29.03.03 .....Poland-Hungary
02.04.03 .....Hungary-Sweden
02.04.03 .....Poland-San Marino
30.04.03 .....Latvia-San Marino
07.06.03 .....Hungary-Latvia
07.06.03 .....San Marino-Sweden
11.06.03 .....San Marino-Hungary
11.06.03 .....Sweden-Poland
06.09.03 .....Latvia-Poland
06.09.03 .....Sweden-San Marino
10.09.03 .....Latvia-Hungary
10.09.03 .....Poland-Sweden
11.10.03 .....Hungary-Poland
11.10.03 .....Sweden-Latvia

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Latvia	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
Hungary	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Poland	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Sweden	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
San Marino	3	0	0	3	0	6	0

Group 5

Germany, Scotland, Iceland, Lithuania, Faroe Islands

07.09.02 .....Faroe Islands-Scotland.....2-2
07.09.02 .....Lithuania-Germany 0-2
12.10.02 .....Iceland-Scotland.....0-2
12.10.02 .....Lithuania-Faroe Islands 2-0
16.10.02 .....Germany-Faroe Islands.....2-1
16.10.02 .....Iceland-Lithuania 3-0
29.03.03 .....Germany-Lithuania
29.03.03 .....Scotland-Iceland
02.04.03 .....Lithuania-Scotland
07.06.03 .....Iceland-Faroe Islands
07.06.03 .....Scotland-Germany
11.06.03 .....Faroe Islands-Germany
11.06.03 .....Lithuania-Iceland
20.08.03 .....Faroe Islands-Iceland
06.09.03 .....Iceland-Germany
06.09.03 .....Scotland-Faroe Islands
10.09.03 .....Faroe Islands-Lithuania
10.09.03 .....Germany-Scotland
11.10.03 .....Germany-Iceland
11.10.03 .....Scotland-Lithuania

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	2	2	0	0	4	1	6
Scotland	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Iceland	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Lithuania	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Faroe Islands	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

Group 6

Spain, Ukraine, Greece, Northern Ireland, Armenia

07.09.02 .....Armenia-Ukraine.....2-2
07.09.02 .....Greece-Spain 0-2
12.10.02 .....Spain-Northern Ireland 3-0
12.10.02 .....Ukraine-Greece.....2-0
16.10.02 .....Greece-Armenia.....2-0
16.10.02 .....Northern Ireland-Ukraine 0-0
29.03.03 .....Armenia-Northern Ireland
29.03.03 .....Ukraine-Spain
02.04.03 .....Northern Ireland-Greece
02.04.03 .....Spain-Armenia
07.06.03 .....Spain-Greece
07.06.03 .....Ukraine-Armenia
11.06.03 .....Greece-Ukraine
11.06.03 .....Northern Ireland-Spain
06.09.03 .....Armenia-Greece
06.09.03 .....Ukraine-Northern Ireland
10.09.03 .....Northern Ireland-Armenia
10.09.03 .....Spain-Ukraine
11.10.03 .....Armenia-Spain
11.10.03 .....Greece-Northern Ireland

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Ukraine	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Greece	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Armenia	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Northern Ireland	2	0	1	1	0	3	1

Group 7

Turkey, England, Slovakia, Macedonia, Liechtenstein

07.09.02 .....Turkey-Slovakia 3-0
08.09.02 .....Liechtenstein-Macedonia 1-1
12.10.02 .....Macedonia-Turkey 1-2
12.10.02 .....Slovakia-England 1-2
16.10.02 .....England-Macedonia 2-2
16.10.02 .....Turkey-Liechtenstein 5-0
29.03.03 .....Liechtenstein-England
29.03.03 .....Macedonia-Slovakia
02.04.03 .....England-Turkey
02.04.03 .....Slovakia-Liechtenstein
07.06.03 .....Macedonia-Liechtenstein
07.06.03 .....Slovakia-Turkey
11.06.03 .....England-Slovakia
11.06.03 .....Turkey-Macedonia
06.09.03 .....Liechtenstein-Turkey
06.09.03 .....Macedonia-England
10.09.03 .....England-Liechtenstein
10.09.03 .....Slovakia-Macedonia
11.10.03 .....Liechtenstein-Slovakia
11.10.03 .....Turkey-England

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
England	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Macedonia	3	0	2	1	4	5	2
Liechtenstein	2	0	1	1	1	6	1
Slovakia	2	0	0	2	1	5	0

Group 8

Belgium, Croatia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Andorra

07.09.02 .....Belgium-Bulgaria 0-2
07.09.02 .....Croatia-Estonia 0-0
12.10.02 .....Andorra-Belgium.....0-1
12.10.02 .....Bulgaria-Croatia.....2-0
16.10.02 .....Bulgaria-Andorra 2-1
16.10.02 .....Estonia-Belgium.....0-1
29.03.03 .....Croatia-Belgium
02.04.03 .....Croatia-Andorra
02.04.03 .....Estonia-Bulgaria
30.04.03 .....Andorra-Estonia
07.06.03 .....Bulgaria-Belgium
07.06.03 .....Estonia-Andorra
11.06.03 .....Belgium-Andorra
11.06.03 .....Estonia-Croatia
06.09.03 .....Andorra-Croatia
06.09.03 .....Bulgaria-Estonia
10.09.03 .....Andorra-Bulgaria
10.09.03 .....Belgium-Croatia
11.10.03 .....Belgium-Estonia
11.10.03 .....Croatia-Bulgaria

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Belgium	3	2	0	1	2	2	6
Estonia	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Croatia	2	0	1	1	0	2	1
Andorra	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Group 9

Italy, Serbia-Montenegro, Finland, Wales, Azerbaijan

07.09.02 .....Azerbaijan-Italy.....0-2
07.09.02 .....Finland-Wales 0-2
12.10.02 .....Finland-Azerbaijan.....3-0
12.10.02 .....Italy-Serbia-Montenegro* 1-1
16.10.02 .....Wales-Italy 2-1
16.10.02 .....Serbia-Montenegro*-Finland 2-0
20.11.02 .....Azerbaijan-Wales 0-2
12.02.03 .....Serbia-Montenegro-Azerbaijan.....2-2
29.03.03 .....Italy-Finland
29.03.03 .....Wales-Azerbaijan
02.04.03 .....Serbia-Montenegro-Wales
07.06.03 .....Finland-Serbia-Montenegro
11.06.03 .....Azerbaijan-Serbia-Montenegro
11.06.03 .....Finland-Italy
06.09.03 .....Azerbaijan-Finland
06.09.03 .....Italy-Wales
10.09.03 .....Wales-Finland
10.09.03 .....Serbia-Montenegro-Italy
11.10.03 .....Italy-Azerbaijan
11.10.03 .....Wales-Serbia-Montenegro

**Serbia-Montenegro played first two qualifiers as Yugoslavia*

GROUP 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wales	3	3	0	0	6	1	9
Serbia-M'negro	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Italy	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Finland	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Azerbaijan	4	0	1	3	2	9	1

Group 10

Rep Ireland, Russia, Switzerland, Georgia, Albania

07.09.02 .....Russia-Rep Ireland.....4-2
08.09.02 .....Switzerland-Georgia 4-1
12.10.02 .....Albania-Switzerland.....1-1
16.10.02 .....Rep Ireland-Switzerland 1-2
16.10.02 .....Russia-Albania.....4-1
29.03.03 .....Albania-Russia
29.03.03 .....Georgia-Rep Ireland
02.04.03 .....Albania-Rep Ireland
02.04.03 .....Georgia-Switzerland
30.04.03 .....Georgia-Russia
07.06.03 .....Rep Ireland-Albania
07.06.03 .....Switzerland-Russia
11.06.03 .....Rep Ireland-Georgia
11.06.03 .....Switzerland-Albania
06.09.03 .....Georgia-Albania
06.09.03 .....Rep Ireland-Russia
10.09.03 .....Albania-Georgia
10.09.03 .....Russia-Switzerland
11.10.03 .....Russia-Georgia
11.10.03 .....Switzerland-Rep Ireland

GROUP 10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Russia	2	2	0	0	8	3	6
Albania	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Rep Ireland	2	0	0	2	3	6	0
Georgia	1	0	0	1	1	4	0

- The 10 group winners qualify for the finals automatically; the 10 runners-up will play-off in five head-to-head, home and away ties, the winners of which also qualify.
- Qualifying play-off dates: Nov 15, 2003; Nov 19, 2003.
- Portugal qualify automatically for the finals as hosts.
- Finals tournament: opening match – June 12, 2004, in Oporto; Final – July 4, 2004, in Lisbon.

Barça bounce back

Sid Lowe reports on the revival of Spain's crisis club under new coach Raddy Antic

Jumping for joy...Javier Saviola and Patrick Kluivert celebrate better times at Camp Nou under the new regime

WHAT a difference a day makes. Amid the greatest crisis in the club's history, Barcelona president Joan Gaspart finally walked – and the galvanizing effect was immediate.

Gaspart initially agreed to step down on April 1, subsequently amended to March 1. Then came the February 12 announcement that he had again changed his mind and was abandoning the post immediately. "I'm sorry I wasn't up to being president," he said, and for once everyone agreed that he'd done the right thing.

Enric Reyna took over, the tension evaporated and Barcelona's fortunes took a dramatic turn. New manager Radomir Antic's first game in charge – under Gaspart – had been an initially promising but ultimately disappointing 2-2 draw with Athletic Bilbao. Now, with Gaspart's departure providing what Antic described as "welcome tranquillity", Barcelona secured a vital 2-0 victory against neighbours Espanyol in Montjuic. The crisis-ridden club had stepped into the clean air of the plaza. What a difference, indeed.

The derby kick-started Barça's recovery: they set a Champions League record of 11 successive wins (qualifying and group games) with a 3-0 victory over Internazionale and the following Sunday thrashed Betis 4-0. This was followed by creditable draws away to Inter (0-0) and at Osasuna's notoriously difficult El Sadar stadium (2-2). Winless in five under Gaspart, Reyna's Barcelona were unbeaten in the same number. Even Antic couldn't believe it. "It's a miracle," he said.

The truce may be temporary but the fans have been won back. Even the continued absence of Juan Roman Riquelme – a bone of contention under Louis Van Gaal – has ruffled few feathers. This is unsurprising given the seven goals in two Camp Nou appearances, against Inter and, especially, Betis: last time they met, in September, the Seville side were mouth-watering in winning 3-0 and could have scored far more.

That defeat signalled the beginning of Barça's descent; revenge confirmed things are looking up.

Antic's Barça play with more freedom, passion and ability; only Gaizka Mendieta continues to disappoint. The Serbian manager has added width, with Marc Overmars switched to the right and new left-back Juan Pablo Sorin joining the attack. Antic has also brought increased defensive stability – even Frank De Boer is no longer booed.

Few players have benefited as much as Javier Saviola. Despite scoring 17 goals last season, the Argentinian was never fully backed by Van Gaal. Now, granted freedom and brimming with confidence, he's flying. His energy, movement and goals have been vital; he ran Inter ragged and scored a first career hat-trick against Betis. A change really is as good as a break.

Which is something Atletico Madrid fans may be eyeing, after owner Jesus Gil's conviction for fraud – one he inevitably dismissed as a "political vendetta". Gil has been sentenced to three years imprisonment and ordered to return the 156,542

shares he acquired with an allegedly fictitious payment when the club floated in 1992. He has also been forced to repay the £10million he is accused of pocketing via false contracts written up in 1998.

But the judgment, a complicated 40-page document, leaves more questions than answers; commentators claimed it was "written in hieroglyphics". The club remains under Gil's presidency (not his ownership), his shares cannot be sold until there is a definitive judgment, and he continues to enjoy the tacit support of small shareholders.

Nor will he be going to jail. At least, not until his appeal at the Supreme Court (and even the Constitutional Court, should that fail). That could take years and his heart complaint makes him unlikely to serve time. Besides, the appeal may succeed, thanks to the legal 'sell-by-date': the prosecution had five years to bring their case; the alleged crimes occurred over seven years ago.

Atletico will feel the effects. The judgment has accelerated Gil's decision to reorganise and cut costs. Atletico's on-loan players – with Milan's Cosmin Contra, Demetrio Albertini and Jose Mari heading the list – are unlikely to stay, while sporting director Paulo Futre's future is also doubtful. But Gil insists that he won't sell the club's greatest asset – despite reports of a £28m bid from England, Fernando Torres will be "going nowhere".

Much like Ronaldo, in fact. He has opted not to attend the Rio Carnival, something gleefully hailed as a victory for Real Madrid. "No to Samba, yes to hard work!" was *Marca's* headline. "Ronaldo decides in favour of his club for the first time ever." Few believe it was the Brazilian's decision, though – staying put smacks of a club reaction to some disappointing performances and whispers of unprofessionalism. Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer attacked Ronaldo's weight, Real coach Vicente Del Bosque admitted the Brazilian is the only one "not integrated in the tasks of the team", and team-mate Michel Salgado said "Ronaldo's not at his best and he knows it." Then there was the hidden camera in a Madrid nightclub, the Bernabeu boos and a series of insider leaks questioning the player's willingness to pull his ample weight.

Best of luck...outgoing Barça president Joan Gaspart (right) hands over to Enric Reyna

Unstoppable...Raul has reached another milestone

Ronaldo responded with a stunning hat-trick as Madrid beat Alaves 5-1 to replace Real Sociedad at the top. He now has 13 goals, is on course for his 25-goal target, and insists he's back to his best.

Ronaldo was just one of four Madrid strikers in the headlines over the past month. Fernando Morientes refused to go on as a late sub against Borussia Dortmund at the Bernabeu and, according to a radio report, responded to Del Bosque's call with a quickfire: "Go on yourself, you son of a bitch." The striker apologised for the remark, which he blamed on the "little devil inside", but his timing was awful. Taking advantage of the "rubbish minutes" Morientes refused, Javier Portillo leapfrogged him in the pecking order with a goalscoring two-minute appearance against Valladolid and, three days later, a 90th-minute winner in the return against Borussia Dortmund. He'd been on for 59 seconds.

Completing the saga is Raul. The man Fernando Hierro calls "The Ferrari" never stops. While Ronaldo grabbed a hat-trick against Alaves, Raul scored two – taking him above Hugo Sanchez in Madrid's all-time goalscorers' chart, with 208. Few doubt he'll catch Puskas (242), Santillana (289) and Di Stefano (307). And, as if that wasn't enough, Raul celebrated Spain's friendly with Germany by becoming the national team's all-time leading scorer – aged just 25.

A very different story for Athletic Bilbao midfielder Carlos Gurpegi, who on the season's opening day tested positive for the metabolic hormone 19-Nandrosterona – due, so said the allegations, to injecting banned steroid nandrolone. The Spanish federation dithered horrendously, taking three months to announce the result and, two months later, a decision on a punishment still hadn't been reached. Eventually, the *Consejo Superior de Deportes* – having threatened to dismiss the case because of the shoddy way it had been managed – intervened, forcing a 'cautionary' suspension on Gurpegi while a final judgment was made.

Gurpegi continues to protest his innocence, arguing his body naturally generates 19-Nandrosterona during physical exertion. His explanation is backed by a study undertaken at the University of Extremadura. The tests, carried out when Athletic played Valladolid in December immediately after the initial allegations, showed Gurpegi's pre-match 19-Nandrosterona level to be 0 nanograms per millilitre, and his post-match level to be 7.15 (the 'normal' natural level is 2 ng/ml).

So far, the sporting authorities have rejected the evidence, even though – at the very least – it introduces reasonable doubt. The repercussions for doping cases, and not just Gurpegi's, could be enormous.

Goal machine

Deadly Dutch striker leading the race for this year's top League scorer award

ROY MAKAAY is very, very quick and scores goals. Lots of goals. And that, it sometimes seems, is that: he is La Liga's top scorer (the Pichichi) with 19 goals in just 24 games and has hit nine in the Champions League.

But somehow the Deportivo La Coruna striker seems to pass by quietly, almost unnoticed. There is always someone else more interesting, more talented, more exciting to talk about.

Maybe that's because all Makaay seems to do is score goals. A victim of the Dutch obsession with footballers of touch and class, not to mention competition from such enormously talented players as Ruud Van Nistelrooy or Dennis Bergkamp, Makaay has not made the international impact his strike rate warrants. In Spain, where he outscored the rest of the League in 1999-2000, just as he's doing this year, he is rarely, if ever, in the spotlight. How could it be otherwise when he has kept such exalted company over the past five years? Men like Ronaldo, Raul and Rivaldo.

Even at Deportivo, Makaay is the quiet man, barely registering alongside the more flamboyant skills of last year's Pichichi, the outrageously talented Diego Tristan, or the exuberance of Albert Luque. President Augusto Lendoiro reckons "Deportivo have three Ronaldos" – and Makaay is the least 'Brazilian' of them. But it's not just Luque and Tristan – what about the vision and subtlety of Juan Carlos Valeron? Or even, as used to be the case, the insane brilliance of Djalminha?

Yet Makaay's record is superb. By goals alone he has certainly left his mark. Having begun his career at Vitesse Arnhem, for whom he scored 19 League goals in his final season, 1996-97, his Spanish stepping-stone was Tenerife. A difficult first year saw him net just seven times, but he hit an impressive 14 next season, even though the Canary Islanders were relegated.

In the summer of 1999 the Dutchman moved to Deportivo and scored 22 times to take the Galicians to the only League title in their history – the moment he rates the best of his career.

But even that wasn't quite enough. Depor went for Malaga striker Catanha only to lose out to Celta Vigo. Instead, they snapped up Mallorca's Diego Tristan after his move to Real Madrid broke down because of concerns about his reputation as a party animal. ("What do you want – a footballer or a priest?" Tristan is alleged to have asked Madrid's unconvinced president Florentino Perez.)

A party animal he may have been, but no one doubted Tristan's enormous class, and his arrival forced Makaay to play an unfamiliar role. Coach Javier Irureta's reluctance to field two out-and-out forwards meant that Makaay was denied the continuity a striker craves. He often found himself playing behind Tristan, who hit an impressive 19 goals in 28 games, or wide on the right. Nonetheless, he still scored 16.

Last season, Tristan was simply brilliant – Spain's top scorer on 21 and the hero of Old Trafford in the Champions League. Makaay, by contrast, became ever more frustrated with his role on the wing (one that prompted a couple of high-profile outbursts against his coach) or even on the bench. He scored a disappointing 12 goals and rumours abounded he would be on his way. Roma were said to be keeping tabs.

But then fate dealt Makaay a hand. An inopportune muscle injury ruined Tristan's World Cup and he was still struggling at the start of the new season. Despite the arrival of Luque from Mallorca, Makaay was the obvious replacement and he hasn't wasted the opportunity – 29 goals in total so far, including a hat-trick in the Olympic stadium against Bayern Munich and the world's best goalkeeper, Oliver Kahn. "This season," Makaay says, "has been my best."

Pace apart, it is difficult to define Makaay without stating the obvious: goals. He is, quite simply, deadly. Mallorca manager Gregorio Manzano recently claimed: "Makaay turns the minimum into the maximum – a goal. He's a phenomenon."

Makaay believes his ability to put the ball in the net is "part instinctive, part hard work". Born or acquired, he has it down to a T. That is how effective he is – admirably summed up by sports daily *AS*: "Makaay is impossible to mark because he never has the ball. He only ever seems to have it when he shoots. And then it's too late – he has scored."

Sid Lowe

Fact file

Club Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)
Country Holland
Born March 9, 1975, in Wijchen
Previous clubs Vitesse Arnhem, Tenerife (Spa)
International debut October 1996, v Wales
International caps 21 (2 goals)
Honours Spanish League 2000; Spanish Cup 2002

'Old Lady' take charge

Juve recover from defeats in Europe to beat fellow title challengers Inter. Paddy Agnew reports

Old Lady luck...Guglielminpietro inadvertently glances the ball past Toldo to gift Juventus the lead against Inter

WHEN the full history of the 2002-03 Serie A season is written, it may well be that special mention is made of the first weekend in March. The authoritative 3-0 drubbing handed out by reigning champions Juventus to pretenders Internazionale does not in itself either guarantee Juve the title or wipe out Inter's chances but it sure as hell put the 'Old Lady' right back in the driving seat.

It is always tempting to read too much into the result of a clash such as Juve-Inter, which came with the sides joint top of the table. However, it was the context of the match that merited attention, while its significance was not undermined by Milan's 3-3 home draw on the same day with Atalanta. Milan, after all, are the other team in what is a three-horse title race.

Four days before their emphatic dismissal of Inter, Juventus themselves had been on the wrong end of a 3-0 scoreline when humbled by Manchester United in a second consecutive, second phase Champions League defeat. Even if Juventus could argue that a flu epidemic, injuries to such as Alessandro Del Piero, and Lady Luck had not helped them much, there seemed little comeback from the aggregate 5-1 drubbing dispensed by Alex Ferguson's side.

So when Juventus lined up on the following Sunday night, their reputation (and indeed that of coach Marcello Lippi) was clearly on the line. The aggressive, combative, self-convinced way that Juve set about their task, making the most of an own goal from Andreas Guglielminpietro in the fourth minute, proved that, when the chips are down, they can still stand up and be counted.

Inter, too, had come into the game in a very special Champions League-related moment. Ten days earlier, they had also been humbled in a 3-0 defeat by Barcelona at Camp Nou. A week later, they had struggled and looked less than effective in a 0-0 draw with the Catalans at the San Siro. In between, they had been perfectly awful for an hour against little Piacenza before finally arousing from their slumbers to score three goals in three minutes for a 3-1 win.

Furthermore, Inter (and coach Hector Cuper) came into the game with a 'big match' question mark hanging over them. After all, this is the side that lost the title on the last day of last season when beaten 4-2 by Lazio at the Olympic stadium in a match they simply had to win.

This season, too, Inter have been unimpressive in the peer-group clashes. They drew 1-1 with Juventus at the San Siro in October, thanks to a 95th-minute equaliser, drew with both Roma (2-2) and Lazio (3-3), not to mention a 1-0 defeat by Milan in the first city derby last November.

This latest setback in a crunch clash would suggest that, when the chips are down, Cuper's side simply fail to deliver. Inter, however, have ample opportunity to debunk that theory, starting with a vital five-week run through to mid-April when not only do they meet Bologna, Udinese, Roma and Milan in successive Serie A games but also Newcastle and Bayer Leverkusen in vital second phase Champions League ties.

If results go against Inter, then do not be surprised to find Cuper put firmly in the dock by fans and media alike. The Argentinian might argue that he has hardly been helped by a run of injuries to such as compatriot striker Hernan Crespo and midfielder Matias Almeyda, French midfielder Stephane Dalmat and Sierra Leone striker Mohammed Kallon. Mind you, Inter's owner, Massimo Moratti, did not seem to be buying any of it in the wake of the loss to Juventus. "After a defeat like that, there aren't many excuses," he asserted. "Inter played really badly, six out of the 11 players on the pitch were never at the races...I had the impression that our players really weren't up for it, psychologically."

By contrast, the Juventus camp gloated in the aftermath of the Inter win, which silenced those critics who had been most vocal in the wake of the United debacle. "Anyone could see for themselves the difference between us and Inter, even if this doesn't mean that we've already wrapped up the title," said Juventus *eminence grise* Luciano Moggi.

In reality, in Italy, as in England and Spain, the progress – or lack of it – made by the three title contenders in the Champions League seems sure to hold the key to the domestic title race. It is no secret both Juventus and Milan feel a special buzz about the Champions League this season, while Inter's failure to win the Serie A title since 1989 puts that crown firmly at the top of their wish list.

Just to underline the point, Milan have been the most successful Italian side in Europe this season so far, cruising into the Champions League quarter-finals thanks to four successive 1-0 wins against Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund and Lokomotiv Moscow (twice). That good run means that Serie A defeats (Udinese, Perugia), not to mention draws (Atalanta, Lazio), have not weighed too heavily in the balance – yet.

Milan, of course, were unwitting protagonists in one of the ugliest moments of the season so far when they travelled to Torino in late February. The game was just three minutes old when Filippo Inzaghi opened the scoring, soon to be followed by a double from Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf.

By half-time Torino were trailing 3-0 and the contest was clearly well and truly finished. So, too, however, was the patience of certain so-called Torino fans, who early in the second half set about breaking up one section of the Stadio delle Alpi, eventually forcing a hole in the perimeter fencing and preparing to march towards the pitch.

At that point, perhaps rather tardily and not with huge effectiveness, the security forces intervened, finally opting to calm the turbulent Torino souls with a dose of teargas. The rest is all too predictable. Football cannot be played in a stadium full of teargas, all the more so if and when the rioting 'fans' pick up the teargas canisters and throw them back at the police, towards the pitch.

First, Milan's Brazilian keeper Dida

and shortly afterwards other outfield players were forced to flee. Before long, referee Luca Palanca had no option but to take the players off, finally abandoning the match, which was subsequently awarded to Milan.

No one missed the fact that the violent events seen at the Stadio delle Alpi had been preceded by a decree from the Minister of the Interior, Giuseppe Pisanu, intended to tighten the law concerning football fan violence. The new legislation facilitates immediate arrest of violent fans not only at the stadium but also within 36 hours of the incidents in question. Furthermore, it gives local police chiefs powers to change the date of any game considered 'at risk'.

It very much remains to be seen if the ministerial decree, which has to be ratified by Parliament within 60 days, will do much to confront a problem whose roots go far beyond mere considerations of law and order.

Finally, a word about the national team. After the misery of the early Euro 2004 qualifiers in the autumn, highlighted by that 2-1 defeat by Wales in Cardiff, Giovanni Trapattoni's Italy finally got back on the winning road with a 1-0 friendly defeat of Portugal in Genoa. Much attention was understandably paid to the sparkling debut of Perugia's brilliant little striker Fabrizio Miccoli (see profile, right), without doubt the discovery of the season so far.

In hindsight, however, the friendly may prove more significant because it marked the debut of Italo-Argentine Mauro Camoranesi. Although born and bred in Argentina, the 26-year-old has claimed Italian citizenship through great-grandfather Luigi Camoranesi, who came from the little village of Potenza Picenza, near Urbino, in the Marche region.

Camoranesi had reached only Division Three level in Argentina before emigrating to Italy in summer 2000, after spells in Mexico and Uruguay. Despite an excellent Serie A start with Verona, he continued to go unnoticed back home.

In the end, little birdies started to twitter and one of them suggested to Trapattoni that if he were to offer a cap to 'citizen' Camoranesi, then the midfielder, by now at Juventus, might just take him up on the offer. Last December, Trapattoni accordingly phoned. After thinking about it for a month, Camoranesi said yes.

In an admirably frank statement on the eve of the Portugal game, he explained that in the end it had been easy enough to choose between Italy and Argentina, saying: "Argentina never came looking for me, so I never had to choose. One day Trapattoni called me. I thought his offer over and made up my mind almost two months ago to accept it. I remain an Argentinian, but this is a golden opportunity for my career."

Needless to say, there were those such as compatriot Gabriel Batistuta, Inter keeper Francesco Toldo, Italian icon Paolo Maldini and Juventus team-mate Alessio Tacchinardi who criticised his choice, accusing him of a cynical betrayal of his roots.

Yet the critics perhaps do not know their history. Camoranesi is the 16th Italo-Argentine to play for Italy, while he is the 35th 'foreigner' of Italian origin to line up for the *Azzurri*. Brazilians and Uruguayans as well as one Swiss, one Paraguayan, one USA citizen and one Scotsman have all worn the national colours. Remember, too, Argentinians such as Orsi, Monti and Guaita played key roles in Italy's 1934 World Cup triumph.

Camoranesi says simply that he "owes" more to Italian than Argentinian football. Perhaps. What is absolutely certain is Argentina's loss is quite clearly Italy's gain.

Combat ready...police prepare to confront rioting Torino fans at Stadio delle Alpi

Pro-file Fabrizio Miccoli

Little Perugia striker with a big future

AN OLD cliche claims that a 'good big 'un is better than a good little 'un', but Fabrizio Miccoli is busy making Italian soccer think again after bursting on to not only Serie A but also the international scene this season.

The 5ft 6in Perugia striker is one of the smallest packages in the game but his goals and assists have been making the giants tremble. He had scored six League goals by the first week of March, propelled Perugia to the Italian Cup semi-finals, and set up the winner on his Italy debut against Portugal.

The 23-year-old was brought up in San Donato near Lecce, in the heel of Italy, and was so homesick after joining Milan at 13 that they released him. After a spell at Third Division Casarano, he made his Serie B debut with Umbrians Ternana. At first he worked his legs off in central midfield. But, as he gained in experience, so he exerted an increasing creative influence and gained the confidence to go forward in search of goals. Miccoli scored 15 in his first three seasons and as many again last term.

Juventus snapped him up but, with no first-team slot available, were happy to loan him to Perugia. Here, Miccoli was handed the freedom to roam the length and breadth of attack by coach Serse Cosmi. Ironically, the striker not only created most of the goals but contributed the strikes that helped knock Juventus out of the Cup.

Miccoli's rapid rise was crowned when Giovanni Trapattoni, without Francesco Totti and Alessandro Del Piero, called him up for the Portugal friendly in February. On the hour Miccoli wriggled free of his marker, fired in a drive that keeper Ricardo could not hold, and Lazio's Bernardo Corradi converted the rebound for the only goal.

Miccoli knows that when Totti and Del Piero are fit he will drop down the pecking order. But, at a time of some cynicism about national team matches, he has a refreshingly old-fashioned pride in representing his country. He says: "I know I may not be first choice against Finland in the Euro 2004 qualifiers, but I will be happy just to be called up for the squad. I'd even play at full-back or in goal if that's where Italy needed me."

In June Miccoli is due to return to Juventus. He says: "It's amazing to think that soon I'll be playing alongside superstars like Del Piero, Trezeguet, Salas and Nedved. But I daren't think about Juventus yet. After all that's happened to me this season, that would be just greedy."

Keir Radnedge

Fact file

Club Perugia
Country Italy
Born June 27, 1979, in Nardo
Previous clubs Casarano, Ternana, Juventus
International debut February 2003, v Portugal
International caps 1 (0 goals)

Mediterranean spree

Marseille and Monaco revive memories as they go head to head for the title. Nick Bidwell reports

OLYMPIQUE MARSEILLE and Monaco are once again going head to head for the League title, reviving memories of the early 1990s when OM president Bernard Tapie regularly crossed swords at the top of the table with Monaco coach Arsene Wenger.

But the fact that only 10 points separated first place from 10th after 28 rounds of the current championship speaks volumes about a League in which standards have levelled off to an amazing degree.

What has set the two Mediterranean clubs apart from a chasing pack that features Lyon, Bordeaux and Nice is their consistency, their ability to grind out results even when not firing on all cylinders.

Although Marseille may not possess the star quality and attacking swagger that characterised the side of the successful Tapie era, the current line-up is a highly efficient unit. Much praise must go to new coach Alain Perrin, who worked wonders at Troyes for nine years and is now demonstrating the same flair for tactical organisation and motivation at Marseille.

His team's force is at the back. Croat keeper Vedran Runje has been outstanding all season, while OM's back four is close to hermetically sealed. Left-back Manuel Dos Santos and giant Belgian centre-back Daniel Van Buyten are worthy of special mention. Indeed, Van Buyten, a target for a number of English sides, is also one of OM's principal attacking weapons, for ever a threat in the air at set-pieces.

As talk of a first Marseille championship since 1992 sweeps Provence, Perrin does what he can to play down expectations. "Our only goal is to qualify for Europe," he maintains. It's just a shame that no one is listening.

The title push from Monaco, unbeaten in 13 League matches up to the beginning of March, has taken everyone by surprise. Not long ago they were a club in total disarray, riven by cliques in the dressing-room, players desperate to leave, debts of over £35 million and strained relations between coach Didier Deschamps and president Jean-Louis Campora. But now harmony has broken out in Monte Carlo.

New investors are soon to come on board, and Deschamps' team is performing splendidly, led by brilliant attacking midfielders Ludovic Giuly and Jerome Rothen and in-form striker Shabani Nonda. "We are made of the stuff of champions," claims skipper Giuly.

On the international front, France deservedly lost 2-0 to the Czech Republic in a friendly in Paris, the first defeat for coach Jacques Santini since replacing Roger Lemerre last summer.

Santini included Bayern Munich left-back Bixente Lizarazu and Juventus striker David Trezeguet for the first time since the World Cup misadventure, and also recalled Arsenal midfielder Robert Pires following the latter's knee injury. But the coach saw much to concern him: imprecise passing, a lack of bite in the tackle, attackers too often caught offside and even an off-colour Zinedine Zidane.

"Our creative players had a bad day and I thought there was a flagrant lack of mobility," went the post-match Santini analysis. "The Czechs did what they had to do, sitting back and hitting on the break. Their pressing game gave us trouble all match. The disappointments were numerous."

GERMANY

Bayer call time on Toppi

Leverkusen's coach pays the price as last season's triple runners-up nosedive

KLAUS TOPPMOLLER'S pop vocalist daughter, Sarah Nina, might be tempted to sing the blues after her father's sacking as coach of Bayer Leverkusen.

With self-belief haemorrhaging, results going from bad to worse and the team nosediving towards the Second Division, chief executive Reiner Calmund and his board gave Toppi as much time as they dared to turn the situation around. They banked on Germany's Coach of 2002 somehow rediscovering the magic formula that underpinned their hat-trick of runners-up spots in last season's Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup. A forlorn hope.

Five straight League defeats meant the point of no return. Less than a day after a 2-1 loss to Hansa Rostock – Leverkusen's seventh at home this season – Toppmoller was shown the door. "We are, of course, sorry to see Klaus go," said Calmund. "He made us one of the best clubs in the world last season and his work was outstanding. But we're in a very precarious state and we had no choice."

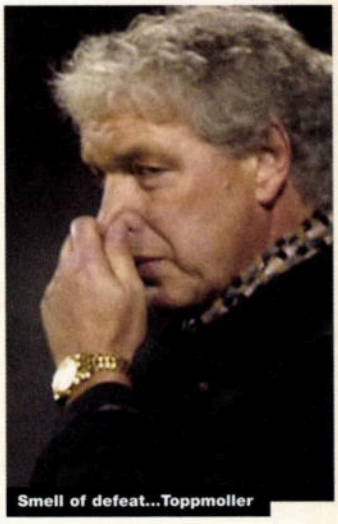
Strange how often despair has swiftly followed triumph in Toppi's footballing life. A stack of goals for Kaiserslautern in the spring of 1976, including a famous hat-trick against Bayern Munich, plus a goal on his debut for West Germany against Spain, seemed to cement his place in that summer's European Championship finals in Yugoslavia, only for a knee injury to force him out of the squad. He would play just twice more for the *Nationalmannschaft*.

Nor will Toppi want to be reminded of the ending to his time in charge of Eintracht Frankfurt. As they swept all before them in the first half of the 1993-94 campaign, he could not resist a swipe at challengers Bayern Munich ("Bye-bye, Bayern."). But he would soon regret his bravado. Eintracht spectacularly fell away and Toppmoller was sacked.

Why, then, did it all go wrong for him at Leverkusen? Many have argued, undeniably, that the seeds of decline were sown when Michael Ballack and Ze Roberto were sold to Bayern last summer. Ballack is one of the best goalscoring midfielders in the world, while Ze Roberto is an ace left-flank provider. So it was always a long shot to hope new signings such as talented but eccentric Czech Jan Simak, from Hannover, and young Daniel Bierofka (1860 Munich) could adequately replace their predecessors.

Another major factor was the loss of form of key men such as keeper Hans-Jorg Butt and midfielders Bernd Schneider and Yildiray Basturk. Then there was the long injury list, featuring skipper and defensive fulcrum Jens Nowotny – who has played only 90 minutes this season after twice snapping cruciate ligaments – and Brazilians Lucio and Juan.

However, nothing has been more damaging to Leverkusen's cause than their sterile front line. They could once rely on the goalscoring nous of Ulf Kirsten. But with the 37-year-old now in the twilight of his career, there was simply no one else to convert the chances. Thomas Brdaric and Dimitar Berbatov are not nearly as composed in front of goal; Brazilian Franca has looked a lost soul since arriving from Sao Paulo and Oliver Neuville is a winger, not a central striker.



Smell of defeat...Toppmoller

Ultimately, Toppmoller proved to be ill at ease in times of adversity. Last season when Leverkusen were stylishly stringing wins together, he was adept at keeping his players' feet on the floor and maintaining enthusiasm and solidarity. Yet this term his leadership was nowhere near as effective. Indeed, he never seemed to recognise the wheels had fallen off.

After a shaky start to the season, Toppi swore Champions League qualification was still possible; when Leverkusen went into the break just above the relegation zone, he predicted they would be the team of

Jump to it...Van Buyten (white shirt) is a formidable barrier in OM's defence

the spring and make the UEFA Cup. The gospel according to Toppmoller was the revival would start tomorrow, but tomorrow never came.

Charged with the onerous task of ensuring Leverkusen's survival is 47-year-old caretaker Thomas Horster, a former Germany libero who for the past decade has coached the club's youth and amateur sides. A veteran of 332 League games for the Rhinelanders, he knows the set-up intimately and is a disciplinarian.

Horster was not Leverkusen's first choice. Ex-Werder Bremen, Bayern and Kaiserslautern boss Otto Rehhagel was said to be the No 1 candidate, but unwilling to quit his job with Greece, while Hertha coaches Falko Gotz and Jurgen Rober, and Volker Finke of Freiburg were also in the frame. (Rober has since taken over at Wolfsburg after Wolfgang Wolf decided to go now rather than at the end of the season.)

However, wins against Hannover and Werder in Horster's first two games in charge showed that he does have what it takes to rally the troops. If Leverkusen keep the same spirit for the rest of the season they should comfortably avoid relegation.

Another team involved in a rearguard action are Energie Cottbus, who after flat-lining in the autumn are now showing signs of life. Victorious just twice in the first half of the season, they found themselves bottom of the pile at the break.

But they claimed 13 points from their opening five fixtures of 2003 and have given themselves a fighting chance of conquering their relegation demons for a third consecutive year.

All credit to Cottbus coach Eduard Geyer, often decried as an inflexible, old-style thinker for whom man-to-man marking and playing a sweeper well behind the back line were etched in stone. However, he underwent a conversion during the festivities. Out went the libero, in came a flat back four, and the switch has worked wonders. "We are much more compact and playing so much better," says Romanian midfielder Laurentiu Reghecampf. "We don't care if everybody has written us off. What have we got to lose?"

Nick Bidwell

Pro-file Tobias Rau

Wolfsburg discovery lined up to take Lizarazu's berth at Bayern

YOUNG Germany and Wolfsburg left-back or wing-back Tobias Rau is not one to be influenced by the opinions of his supposed elders and betters.

When Bayern Munich announced their interest in him towards the end of last year, Wolfsburg elder statesman and former Bayern skipper Stefan Effenberg made a public appeal to his 21-year-old team-mate to stay put. But Rau was not to be swayed, agreeing to move to Bayern next summer in a £1.7 million deal.

"I'm convinced my decision is the right one," says Rau, who joined Wolfsburg in 2001 from Second Division Eintracht Braunschweig. "At Bayern I can only improve. I'll be able to experience the atmosphere of the Champions League and every day I'll be learning from top-class players."

Effenberg, however, may have a point. In just his second season in the Bundesliga, Rau is still a novice at the top level, and there is a long list of highly-rated young players who have gone to Bayern only to wither away in a squad crammed with superstars.

Certainly, Rau – who bears an uncanny resemblance to the young Jurgen Klinsmann – is unlikely to immediately force his way into the Bayern first team. With left-back Bixente Lizarazu playing as well as ever, Rau will have to be patient. Moreover, the French international, who recently extended his contract until 2004, sees Rau as a threat and has no intention of rolling out the welcome mat for the new boy. "I'm a professional, not Tobias Rau's teacher," was Lizarazu's abrupt response to the suggestion that the pair would enjoy a master-pupil relationship.

Even so, the 33-year-old Lizarazu cannot go on for ever, and Bayern are justified in thinking that Rau will prove a fine long-term replacement. He combines speed and strength in the tackle with intelligent covering, and his youth means he has plenty of time to improve weaker parts of his game such as heading and attacking ability.

Rau also received a vote of confidence from national team boss Rudi Voller when awarded his first cap in the February friendly in Spain. Indeed, Rau could be the answer to Voller's prayers. Germany currently suffer from a dearth of good left-sided defenders or wing-backs – the future Bayern man may be a useful alternative to Tottenham's oft-injured Christian Ziege or the talented but wildly inconsistent Jorg Bohme of Schalke.

"Tobi's excellent attitude should ensure him an outstanding career," says Wolfgang Wolf, until recently his coach at Wolfsburg. "He always plays to 100 per cent of his capabilities, and that's rare for a young footballer."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Wolfsburg
Country Germany
Born December 31, 1981, in Braunschweig
Previous clubs Sportfreunde Olper, Eintracht Braunschweig
International debut February 2003, v Spain
International caps 1 (0 goals)

Power games

Arsenal fix their sights on another domestic Double as Manchester United march on in Europe. Gavin Hamilton reports

RESULTS in the past month have offered convincing evidence that the balance of power in English football has indeed shifted from the north (Manchester United) to the south (Arsenal).

Liverpool's victory over United in the League Cup Final at Cardiff's Millennium stadium not only served to remind people of the capabilities of Gerard Houllier's side. The result also left United with, realistically, just one trophy to chase, the Champions League.

In the domestic League and FA Cup, Alex Ferguson's team have been left trailing in the wake of an Arsenal side infused with confidence, pace and attacking verve. In the two sides' much-hyped fifth round FA Cup meeting at Old Trafford, Arsenal pulled off a sensational victory which confirmed the squad's strength in depth. Manager Arsene Wenger played a brilliant tactical game, leaving Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp on the bench, along with the jet-lagged Gilberto Silva, who had only just returned from Brazil's friendly in China.

If Arsenal had lost, Wenger could have claimed that he was saving his best players for the League and Europe. By winning, he was able to inflict a potentially lethal blow to United's ambitions.

The furious reaction of Ferguson in the dressing-room afterwards, when he lashed out at a stray boot, which hit David Beckham above an eye, received extensive publicity. Ferguson refused to apologise, an indication that he still rules the roost at Old Trafford. But it was also clear he was aware he had lost the off-pitch mind games with Wenger.

But while the Arsenal boss has the upper hand in domestic combat – demonstrated by comfortable wins over Manchester City and Charlton – the opposite has been true in Europe.

United qualified at a canter for the Champions League quarter-finals with four straight victories, including back-to-back wins over old foes Juventus. Their 3-0 win in Turin featured a fabulous solo goal by Ryan Giggs, the subject of much speculation over a possible summer move to Internazionale despite indifferent domestic form. In contrast, Arsenal, despite wonderful counter-attacking from Henry, Bergkamp, Robert Pires and Patrick Vieira, twice failed to break down a well-organised Ajax and were left sweating on a place in the last eight.

Wenger has said the true test of the side will be when they can compete for the highest prize in Europe. The next three months may well determine whether Arsenal can make the step up from being a good team to a great one.

The Gunners' domestic dominance has been so strong that the League Cup has suddenly become a trophy coveted by the big clubs once again. For United, victory in Cardiff would have meant their first trophy for two seasons. For Liverpool, it was a chance to kickstart a season that had lost its way.

Three players, in particular, played important roles in Liverpool's 2-0 victory. Steven Gerrard and Michael Owen scored the goals while keeper Jerzy Dudek ensured United did not reply. All three have been heavily criticised for below-par performances this season, with Dudek dropped after mistakes handed United victory at Anfield last December. The Pole was only back in the side because of a knee injury to his replacement, Chris Kirkland.

Gerrard played a key role in Liverpool's win by eclipsing Roy Keane in the centre of midfield. Keane, now returned but not fully recovered from a hip injury, announced his retirement from international football, but now looks set to play a reduced role for United as a holding midfielder or even, as he did against Juventus in Turin, in central defence. How United will be affected remains to be seen, but Ferguson may already be contemplating summer changes to inject more dynamism into his midfield.

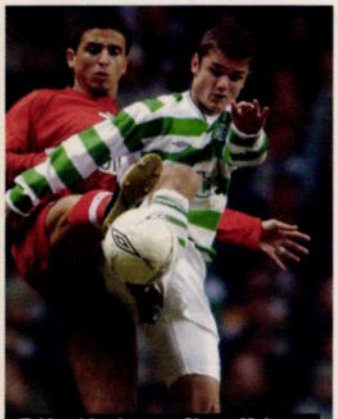
Meanwhile, Ferguson has claimed that United lined up England coach Sven Goran Eriksson to replace him last summer, until his change of heart. Though this was denied by United chief executive Peter Kenyon, it did little to appease the poor relations now existing between United and the FA.

Ferguson also insisted he will see out his contract, which expires in 2005 and hinted that he may stay at Old Trafford for some seasons after that. He has no doubt been inspired by the example of Bobby Robson at Newcastle, who celebrated his 70th birthday by watching his side beat Bayer Leverkusen to stay in contention in the Champions League. At home, a string of good results has left Newcastle with the strong possibility of finishing second behind Arsenal and thus claiming the second automatic Champions League spot.

One of Robson's proteges, Jermaine Jenas, was one of the few bright spots from England's friendly defeat by Australia at Upton Park. Eriksson was strongly criticised for his decision to play a different team in each half to appease the clubs, who did not want to see their highly-paid stars put at risk.

Eriksson's gameplan played into the hands of a highly-motivated Australian team and overshadowed the debuts of Wayne Rooney – England's youngest ever player – and Southampton's James Beattie. Ahead of the crucial Euro 2004 qualifiers against Liechtenstein and Turkey, the club v country dispute has divided English football as never before.

Big two do battle...Ryan Giggs and Ray Parlour tussle during Arsenal's FA Cup win at Old Trafford


Taking his chance...Shaun Maloney

SCOTLAND

Scots' slump continues

THE national team's depressing downward spiral continued with an insipid performance in a 2-0 friendly defeat at home to a makeshift Republic of Ireland side.

A transparent lack of quality was matched by an equally obvious lack of passion among the Scottish players, many of whom now appear to treat defeat as an occupational hazard.

While coach Berti Vogts does not have the quality of player available to his predecessors, there can be no excuse for the absence of commitment against Ireland.

On the domestic front, Celtic have been coping admirably with the loss of top scorer Henrik Larsson, who broke his jaw in a League game against Livingston. Martin O'Neill's men are making a spirited defence of their title, sweeping aside the suggestion they are a one-man team.

O'Neill has taken advantage of Larsson's absence by offering first-team experience to youngsters such as Shaun Maloney and Jamie Smith, both of whom have shown their goalscoring abilities.

League leaders Rangers continue to grind out victories as they endeavour to wrestle the title back from Celtic. Dutchman Ronald De Boer, normally a midfielder, has been finding the net on a regular basis following manager Alex McLeish's decision to play him up front. De Boer, who took time to settle at Ibrox, is playing the best football of his Rangers career. His form gives McLeish additional options in an area where he already has a wealth of international talent in Shota Arveladze, Claudio Caniggia and Peter Lovenkrands.

Alan Fairley

WALES

Nine without loss – a record

WALES' 2-2 draw against Bosnia-Herzegovina in their February friendly extended the side's unbeaten run to a record nine matches. Although the performance was below par, confidence is at a high ahead of the Euro 2004 qualifiers against Azerbaijan and Serbia-Montenegro.

In the League, Total Network Solutions and Barry Town both dropped points during February, leaving the door ajar for third-placed Bangor City to mount a late title challenge. Bangor held Barry to a 1-1 draw at home to stay within five points of the top on the same day TNS were also held 1-1, at home by Newtown.

Ton Pentre were the only second level team to reach the Cup quarter-finals, their reward a tie against lowly top-flight Oswestry Town.

Mel Thomas

N IRELAND

National team still in a fog

NORTHERN IRELAND'S depressing international record continued with a 1-0 friendly defeat by Finland at Windsor Park. The national team have not scored in 622 minutes, and their last victory was back in October 2001, away to Malta.

The Finland game was shrouded in fog for the first hour, with Liverpool's Sami Hyypia scoring the only goal just after half-time. The fog lifted but not Irish fortunes and the result does not augur well for the forthcoming Euro 2004 games away to Armenia and home to Greece.

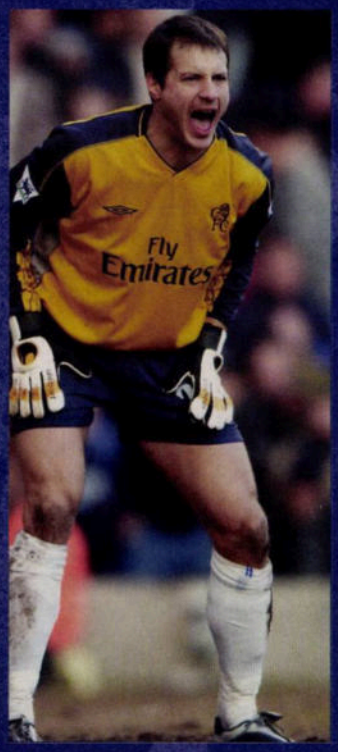
In the League, Glentoran's 1-0 home victory over closest challengers Portadown put them 12 points clear and in sight of the championship.

Glenavon sacked manager Colin Malone after slipping to second bottom following a 2-0 defeat by fellow strugglers Crusaders. New man at the helm is Alfie Wylie, formerly assistant coach at Coleraine.

Roy Kitson

Pro-file Carlo Cudicini

Chelsea's Italian keeper in the top form of an unlucky career



CARLO CUDICINI'S impressive emergence with Chelsea has fully compensated him for the myriad disappointments of his earlier career. While the 29-year-old Italian is widely regarded as one of the best goalkeepers in England – agile, a fine shot-stopper and comfortable with the ball at his feet – it has taken many years for him to reach the top after a series of misfortunes.

Cudicini is what is known in Italy as *un figlio d'arte*, the son of a father who has followed the same profession. But unlike his father, Fabio, an imposing figure who won Serie A with Milan in 1968, Carlo never got a first-team game with his hometown club, even though he joined them as a 13-year-old.

It was quite usual for players to be lent to other clubs to gain experience. But in Cudicini's case, everything seemed to go wrong. Aged 20, he went on loan to nearby Como, fell awkwardly in his sixth game and hurt his wrist so badly that he was out for two years. Milan then let him go to Serie C side Prato. "You didn't know if things would go right again with that wrist," says the keeper, but luckily they did, and he made 30 League appearances for the Tuscan club. It was a brief respite, however.

The future had seemed bright at last when Lazio then took him to Rome, but he was to play just part of a single Serie A game at the Olympic stadium. Once again he fell badly, this time injuring his knee, and Lazio let him go, to tiny Castel di Sangro. Cudicini arrived at the start of 1997-98, the season after the club had gallantly saved their Serie B status in the penultimate game, only to disgrace themselves by selling the final match to Bari. In his first season at the club they were relegated. By the following season he was the established first choice but his career seemed to have drifted into the shadows.

Then, in 1999, Chelsea's Italian manager Gianluca Vialli asked his friend Roberto Mancini, at Lazio, to recommend him a keeper to cover Ed De Goey; Mancini remembered Cudicini. Once at Stamford Bridge he had to play a waiting game; in his first season De Goey was impregnable. But when the Dutchman was injured early in the 2000-01 campaign, the Italian got his chance, and he has taken it superbly.

This season, like last, Chelsea have had one of the tightest defences in the Premier League. And while Cudicini is unlikely to emulate his father in winning a championship, the prospect of playing in next season's Champions League is a distinct possibility.

Then the Italian could feel that, after a career plagued by bad fortune, it had finally run his way.

Brian Glanville

Fact file

Club Chelsea (Eng)
Country Italy
Born September 6, 1973, in Milan
Previous clubs Milan, Como, Prato, Lazio, Castel di Sangro

Youth takes centre stage

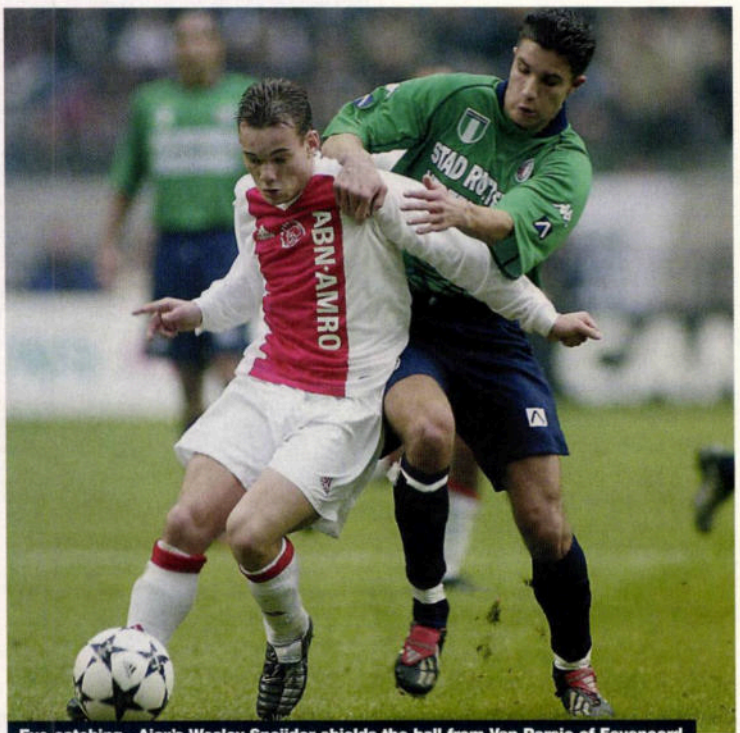
Klaas-Jan Droppert sees the kids shine in Amsterdam

HOLLAND

THE wave of young talent at Ajax and Feyenoord was to the fore during the clubs' recent top-of-the-table clash at the Amsterdam ArenA, with Robin Van Persie, Nigel De Jong, Steven Pienaar and Wesley Sneijder all playing an important part in the 1-1 draw.

Zlatan Ibrahimovic opened the scoring for Ajax, but Van Persie sealed his good performance with the equaliser.

Feyenoord's gifted 19-year-old is blossoming in his role playing off main striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk after overcoming some disciplinary setbacks. Last season, Van Persie was punished for turning up an hour late for training after forgetting to set his clock to summer time. Earlier this season, he was sent home for unprofessional behaviour before the European Supercup match against Real Madrid.



Eye-catching...Ajax's Wesley Sneijder shields the ball from Van Persie of Feyenoord

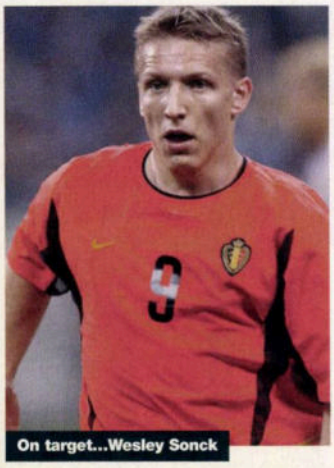
At Ajax the absence of injured Rafael Van der Vaart, still only 20 himself, has hardly been noticed. Against Feyenoord, De Jong, Pienaar and Sneijder held the midfield with aplomb.

Eighteen-year-old De Jong can operate in any defensive or midfield position, while the creative Pienaar (see profile, page 73) has the power to compete with the toughest opponents. The biggest sensation is Sneijder, who was added to the squad after the winter break. The 18-year-old has good vision and a splendid pass with either foot, putting himself in line to succeed Van der Vaart should he leave the club, as seems likely.

Another Ajax player on the way out is Australian keeper Joey Didulica, who will leave at the end of the season after failing to agree a new contract. "They pay me peanuts but I'm not a monkey," he declared.

Despite the attractions of the new generation, national coach Dick Advocaat opted for experience in the February friendly against Argentina. Giovanni Van Bronckhorst, back in the squad after a year's absence through injury, scored the only goal, but Advocaat was furious at being told by Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson to take off Ruud Van Nistelrooy at half-time. "I won't make arrangements with him [Ferguson] any more," said the coach.

RBC Roosendaal have sacked coach Chris Dekker and replaced him with Robert Maaskant, who left the club last season to take over at Second Division Go Ahead Eagles.


On target...Wesley Sonck

BELGIUM

Cup causes TV interference

ANDERLECHT'S defeat on penalties by St Truiden in the Belgian Cup quarter-finals left a curious-looking last four – the others were Germinal Beerschot, Lommel and La Louviere – hardly the line-up envisaged when commercial television station VTM agreed to screen the semi-finals live for the first time on Kanaal 2.

Lommel progressed at the expense of runaway League leaders Club Brugge, who had gone into the quarter-final on the back of two thumping away wins. Indeed, Brugge's 8-0 demolition of Mechelen was their biggest away win since a 12-3 rout of Standard Liege in 1930-31.

Incidentally, Mechelen are to survive, albeit in the Third Division next season, following a creditors meeting at which former players and staff agreed to accept only a tiny percentage of the money owed to them.

The national team warmed up for their Euro 2004 qualifier in Croatia with a 3-1 friendly win over Algeria in Annaba. Belgium were in no mood to do former national coach Georges Leekens any favours in his first game in charge of the North Africans, with Emile Mpenza scoring twice and Wesley Sonck the other.

Nicholas Harling

SWITZERLAND

Doors reopen for Basle

BASLE received a financial boost ahead of the championship play-offs when the FA cut the punishment handed to the club following rioting by their fans at the St Jakob-Park stadium during a game against Grasshopper in early December.

The disciplinary committee initially ordered the champions' first home game of the spring campaign – against Servette – to be played behind closed doors. However, this was modified on appeal to cover only the 'Muttenz curve' of the 31,000-capacity stadium, a notorious trouble spot and the site of the riots during the Grasshopper match.

St Gallen's new coach Heinz Peischl got off to a winning start when his team thrashed Second Division Nafers 4-0 away in the Cup. The Austrian, who replaced Thomas Straub, led Wil 1900 to the top division at the end of last season and, ironically, masterminded one of St Gallen's most embarrassing defeats of all time earlier this term. His promoted charges ran out 11-3 winners during a November League game, prompting Straub to announce he would stand down as soon as a suitable replacement was found.

Peischl has already had a squad clearout, putting five players on the free transfer list. The most prominent departee is United States World Cup defender Frankie Hejduk, who has returned home to join MLS side Columbus Crew.

Ivar von Rulach

PORTUGAL

Campos fired after thumping

LUIS CAMPOS was fired as coach of Vitoria Setubal after his struggling side were thumped 6-2 at home by Benfica. Setubal had actually been 2-0 ahead but crashed after half-time, with League top scorer Simao Sabrosa hitting a hat-trick.

Campos' successor is Diamantino Miranda, who began his coaching career at the club, going on to lead the likes of Gil Vicente and Campomaiorense. However, he has

been working as a TV pundit in recent months.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's first game in charge of the national team ended in a 1-0 defeat by Italy in Genoa. There were first caps for Benfica midfielder Miguel Miranda, Gil Vicente midfielder Luis Loureiro and Porto striker Helder Postiga.

Alberto da Silva

REP OF IRELAND

Dolan pops off to Cork

PAT DOLAN'S move from St Patrick's Athletic to Cork City has caused a stir in the domestic game. Dolan spent 15 years with the Dublin club, first as a player, then as an administrator and manager. But last season Saints had to scrap to avoid a relegation play-off and when Cork offered Dolan a three-year deal, it was too tempting to resist. Assistant boss Eamon Collins has taken the St Pat's helm.

Drogheda retained their Premier Division status by beating First

New challenge...Pat Dolan

Division Galway 3-2 on aggregate in a relegation/promotion play-off.

Champions Bohemians have signed Robert Doyle, top scorer at UCD last season, and St Pat's keeper Seamus Kelly. Bohemians' Glen Crowe, last season's League top scorer, has been voted Player of the Year by his fellow professionals. Shelbourne's Wes Hoolahan was Young Player of the Year.

Sean Creedon

AUSTRIA

Grazer bolstered by derby win

IT HAS been a season of one-sided affairs in Austria. While Austria Wien continue their procession to the title, the recent Graz derby was a similar mismatch.

Two-goal striker Ronald Brunmayr inspired Grazer AK to an emphatic 5-0 win at Sturm Graz, their biggest derby victory for 45 years.

Grazer are now pushing hard for a European qualifying spot, and coach Walter Schachner is very much the hero. Sacked by Austria Wien early in the season to make way for the incoming Christoph Daum, Schachner has bounced back with a vengeance. His team have lost only one game in 10 since the former Austria striker took over, and have risen from bottom to fourth.

Nick Bidwell

LUXEMBOURG

F91 fall foul of foreigners rule

CHAMPIONS F91 Dudelange, the runaway leaders during the autumn, now face a much tougher battle to retain the title after being docked 10 points for fielding too many foreign players during four games.

F91, 14 points clear of Grevenmacher at the winter break, restarted with just a four-point advantage after the federation awarded 3-0 wins to their opponents from the games concerned.

The champions were also expelled from the Cup for the same reason, their 8-1 victory over FC Una Strassen being reversed to a 3-0 defeat.

Tim Brice

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz retain right to join A list

THE Principality's top side, FC Vaduz, have overcome objections to their prospective presence in next season's Swiss top division and will contest the promotion play-offs as planned.

A number of Swiss parties voiced their dissent about Vaduz being given the chance to reach the elite – which they will achieve if they finish in the top two of the eight-team play-offs – while former great clubs such as St Gallen and Lucerne face demotion to the B League. However, Vaduz, who qualified by topping the second level after the autumn campaign, doggedly fought their corner and were given the go-ahead by the Swiss League.

Graeme Crawford

Pro-file Brett Emerton

Australian midfielder eyeing a move to England

EVER since arriving at Feyenoord from Sydney Olympic in summer 2000, Brett Emerton has been linked with English Premier League clubs.

The 24-year-old Australian has never hidden his ambition. "It has always been a dream to play in the Premier League," he says. "Everybody knows what a fantastic league that is, and it would be great to play there. The English game is a very open and attacking type of football. Many have said that it would suit me. They don't have to say it. I can see that myself."

His recent performances, including a goal for Australia against England at Upton Park, have only increased the interest. Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Liverpool and Leeds have all been mentioned, but not every club is likely to interest him.

"Feyenoord are one of the biggest clubs in Holland. If I move elsewhere it will have to be a club where I can develop as a player," says Emerton. "I don't want to go to a huge European club where I will sit on the bench every week. It's the ambition of the club that counts."

Emerton came to Feyenoord on the recommendation of Dave Mitchell, who played in Rotterdam in the 1980s. But it wasn't his first foreign experience. At 15 he and Harry Kewell went on trial at Leeds. Kewell stayed, but Emerton returned home due to work permit problems. "It took me a lot longer to get to Europe, but I wanted to feel ready because it's a big step to move so far away from friends and family."

Emerton adapted quickly – "only the weather and the fanaticism of people here were a bit of a shock". His pace, physique and scoring ability made him one of the best players in the Dutch League within a year, even though he was mostly played at right-back.

Last season he was a key figure in Feyenoord's UEFA Cup success, although he missed the Final through suspension after collecting a second yellow card for time-wasting in the semi-final against Inter.

Disappointingly, Feyenoord crashed out of the Champions League after the first group stage this season. But Emerton has helped keep them in the race to catch PSV at the top of the Dutch League.

His contract runs out in 2004. "It's up to Feyenoord," he says. "If they are still interested in me I have to take it all into account and decide where I can develop most."

But talk of a move to England persists. "I have learned to forget about it and to let other people deal with it," he says. "There are so many stories, and only some of them are true."

Klaas-Jan Droppert

Fact file

Club Feyenoord (Hol)
Country Australia
Born February 22, 1979, in Bankstown
Previous club Sydney Olympic
International caps 23 (5 goals)

CROSSWORD mitre

WIN a top-quality Mitre football

Mitre has kindly donated a top-quality football as first prize for this month's crossword. The first correct entry selected at random after April 11 will win the ball. Five runners-up will each win a *World Soccer Yearbook*. SEND YOUR ENTRY TO: APRIL CROSSWORD, *World Soccer*, King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS.

ACROSS

1 Club Brugge's young Romanian forward secured for free from Anderlecht (6)
3 Anderlecht Aussie recruited from Lillestrom (4)
7 Norwegian forward once with Racing Santander and now at Austria Wien (9)
9 AEK's Yugoslav forward who also served Olympiakos (4)
10 Romanian playmaker exported from Bucharest to Kyiv Dynamo (6)
12 Dutchman in Deportivo's front line (6)
13 Inter and Italy wing-back formerly with Milan (4)
16 Latvian League runners-up in 2002 (9)
17 Brazilian who succeeded Troussier as Japan's national coach (4)
18 FC Copenhagen midfielder given a spot last year in the Denmark side (6)

DOWN

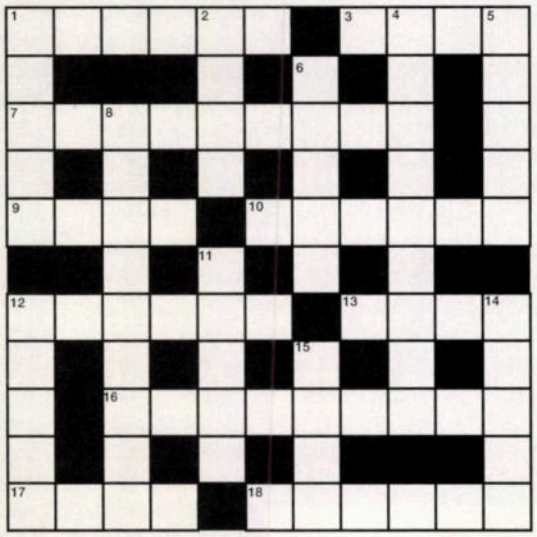
1 Veteran Atletico Madrid left-back snapped up from Barcelona (5)
2 Brazil's captain at the 2002 World Cup (4)
4 Roma goalkeeping stalwart formerly of Milan and Italy (9)
5 Werder Bremen midfielder partnering Lisztes and Micoud (5)
6 Goalscoring Hungarian international midfielder skippering MTK (5)
8 National coach appointed by Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2002 (9)
11 21-year-old Velez Sarsfield striker attracting scouts in Argentina (5)
12 Coach sacked by Villarreal last September (5)
14 Coach who led Denmark to the 2002 World Cup finals (5)
15 Johannesburg-born South Africa defender who's played for Marseille and Watford (4)

FEBRUARY SOLUTION

Across: 7 Utaka, 8 O'Shea, 9 Ronaldo, 10 Kim, 11 Emre, 13 Ruiz, 17 Seo, 18 Emerton, 20 Niemi, 21 Simic.
Down: 1 Duarte, 2 Rahn, 3 Kalla, 4 Govou, 5 Chukwu, 6 Daum, 12 Rooney, 14 Zanaco, 15 Petit, 16 Metsu, 17 Srna, 19 Timm.

FEBRUARY WINNERS

1st prize: Andrew Heaney, Glasgow.
5 runners-up: Melia Mustafaev, Brooklyn, USA; Manuel Castrillo, Leon, Spain; Janis Barbans, Riga District, Latvia; Steve Meck, Tokyo; Bereket Kiflu, Assela, Ethiopia.



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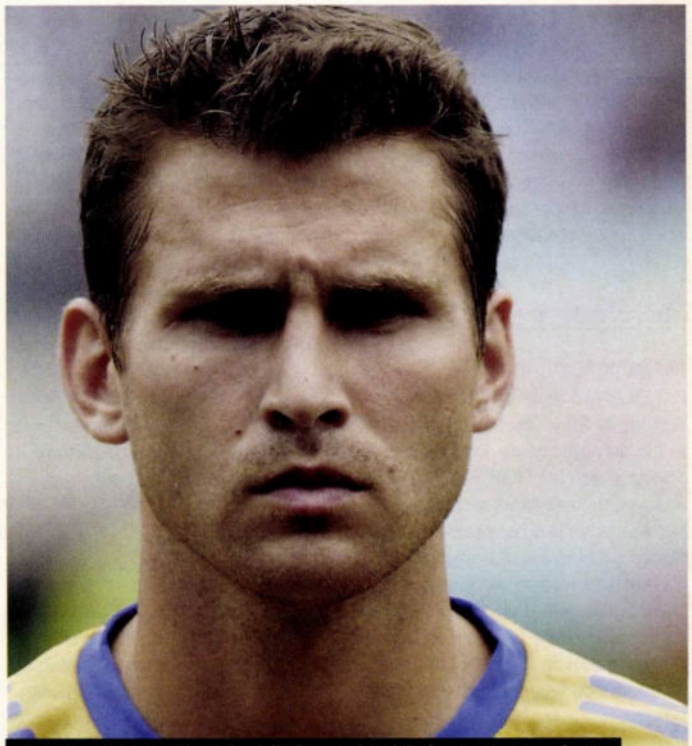
APRIL (photocopied coupons are acceptable)

Jakobsson snubs home clubs

The World Cup defender has left Germany for Denmark, writes Pentti Hietanen



Missing out...Swedish clubs failed to entice Jakobsson to return home

SWEDEN

SWEDISH international defender Andreas Jakobsson ended weeks of speculation about his future by agreeing to join Brondby of Denmark from Germany's Hansa Rostock. The 30-year-old's decision has disappointed a number of Swedish clubs, who were keen to acquire his services ahead of the new domestic season. Jakobsson impressed at last year's World Cup, where he was a late replacement for central defensive stalwart Patrik Andersson.

"We have many defenders, but they are mostly young and lacking in experience," said Brondby coach Michael Laudrup. "Andreas has seen and done it all, and is a fine addition to our squad."

Elfsborg have signed their former top scorer Fredrik Berglund on loan from Holland's Roda JC. Berglund formed a deadly duo with current Southampton midfielder Anders Svensson in his previous spell at Elfsborg.

Hammarby have snatched midfielder Mikkel Jensen from Brondby but lost striker Andreas Hermansson to promoted Enkoping. Hermansson, whose goals were vital in Hammarby's first-ever League title win in 2001, was trailed by several Norwegian clubs, but decided to stay in the Stockholm area.

NORWAY

Friendly descends into farce

NATIONAL coach Nils Johan Semb will have learnt little from Norway's friendly against Greece in Heraklion after appalling weather turned the game into a farce. "I've never played on a worse surface," said forward Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who claimed the match, which ended 1-0 to Greece, should not have gone ahead.

Semb had been hoping to use the game to assess selection alternatives ahead of Euro 2004 qualifiers against Luxembourg and Denmark.

Rosenborg have had better fortunes in their preparations for the new League season. They were unbeaten in eight warm-up matches and showed particularly impressive form against America's San Jose Earthquakes and Viking of Stavanger in La Manga, Spain.

Harald Brattbakk, who has signed

a new three-year contract with the club, scored in both games, while Roar Strand scored Rosenborg's second in the 2-0 win over Viking to show he is fully recovered from his recent injury.

The Stavanger side's new head coach Kjell Inge Olsen has long-term injuries to key players Bjarte Lunde Aarsheim, Erik Fuglestad and Thomas Pereira to contend with, on top of the psychological blow of losing to Rosenborg. However, Bjorn Berland revelled in an unfamiliar forward role, scoring all Viking's goals in their 3-1 win over San Jose.

Bodo/Glimt have also been hit by injury problems, with Runar Berg likely to be sidelined for most of the season. Meanwhile, Sogndal's new coach Jan Halvorsen was boosted by the news that Under-21 internationals Tommy Oren, Rune Bolseth, Alexander Odegaard and Anders Stadheim had all signed new contracts with the club.

Sigurd Odegaard

DENMARK

Jensen undoes 10-man Egypt

CLAUS JENSEN was the surprise goalscoring hero in the friendly against Egypt in Cairo in February, hitting a hat-trick as Denmark ran out 4-1 winners. However, his first, the equaliser to Ahmed Hassan's early strike, came only after Tarek El-Sayed had been sent off after fouling Jon Dahl Tomasson.

Jensen curled in the resultant free-kick, and his side proceeded to take control against their 10-man opponents. Tomasson scored Denmark's second on the hour, and Jensen finished off the comfortable victory with two goals in three minutes.

Jim Holden

FINLAND

Nifty fifty for Hyypia

THE national team's 1-0 friendly win away to Northern Ireland in Belfast in February was a personal milestone for Sami Hyypia.

"Everything went according to plan," said the Liverpool defender, who captained Finland in the absence of Jari Litmanen. "I won my 50th cap and scored the winner in the 50th minute!"

The match also marked the return to international action for forward Mikael Forssell after an absence of nearly a year because of knee injury.

The future of former Finnish champions FC Jazz still hangs in the balance after their application for the League licence was turned down. They have been granted additional time to try to resolve a number of issues that have prevented the licence being granted, including debts of £300,000 in unpaid taxes.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Fram fare better

FRAM reversed the outcome of last year's FA Cup Final by defeating Fylkir 7-6 on penalties in the Reykjavik Cup after a 1-1 draw. The one-off match, which brought the first silverware of the season, was played a full two months earlier than usual thanks to the introduction of full-sized indoor pitches.

Rab Christie

Winner...Sami Hyypia (no 4) scores against Northern Ireland

Pro-file Martin Albrechtsen

Copenhagen youngster heading for the top in defence department

NORMALLY, defenders are the forgotten men at awards ceremonies. Martin Albrechtsen, the young FC Copenhagen centre-back and Danish Superliga player of the autumn, is one of the exceptions.

A ferocious tackler, strong in the air and with plenty of pace, the 22-year-old rarely put a foot wrong in the first half of the campaign. He was thus the logical choice for the mid-term prize when the country's top-flight coaches were polled.

Albrechtsen has improved by leaps and bounds since arriving at Copenhagen from neighbours Akademisk Boldklub (AB) in January 2002. His contribution to Copenhagen's domestic superiority this season – they held a nine-point League lead at the winter break – has been immense. With just 16 goals conceded in 18 games, their defence was the tightest in the division, and Albrechtsen was at the heart of it.

"Yes, Martin has done very well indeed in the past few months," says FC Copenhagen's Swedish coach Hans Backe. "Physically and athletically he's been exceptional, and he's a great competitor. He's been playing with lots of determination and maturity." But for how much longer will Albrechtsen be working under Backe? Rangers are said to be eyeing him as a possible long-term replacement for Lorenzo Amoruso, two or three Bundesliga clubs are keen to sign him, while he has been arousing interest from English clubs such as Sunderland and Blackburn since his days at AB.

Albrechtsen's international future is also looking bright. Last November he won his second cap in Denmark's 2-0 friendly win over Poland in Copenhagen. With usual national team centre-back Martin Laursen currently suffering from a lack of first-team football at Milan, further call-ups should follow.

"There is no better feeling than to be picked for your country," says Albrechtsen, who has also represented Denmark at Under-17, 18 and 21 level. "When I was told by Morten Olsen that I was in the starting 11, it sent a shiver down my spine. I thought I settled in well against Poland. It was good for me the game was played at a ground I knew well. The Copenhagen crowd got right behind me and I felt good from the start.

"An international appearance is a great boost to my confidence. I want to be a regular for Denmark, though I know it will take a lot of hard work to achieve it."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club FC Copenhagen
Country Denmark
Born March 31, 1980, in Copenhagen
Previous clubs Malov, AB
International debut April 2001, v Slovenia
International caps 2 (0 goals)
Honours Danish Cup 1999 (AB)

Boksic in shock retirement

Zdravko Reic on how the forward's decision rocked the national team

CROATIA

CROATIA forward Alen Boksic caused a sensation by announcing his retirement on the eve of a Euro 2004 warm-up game against Poland in Split.

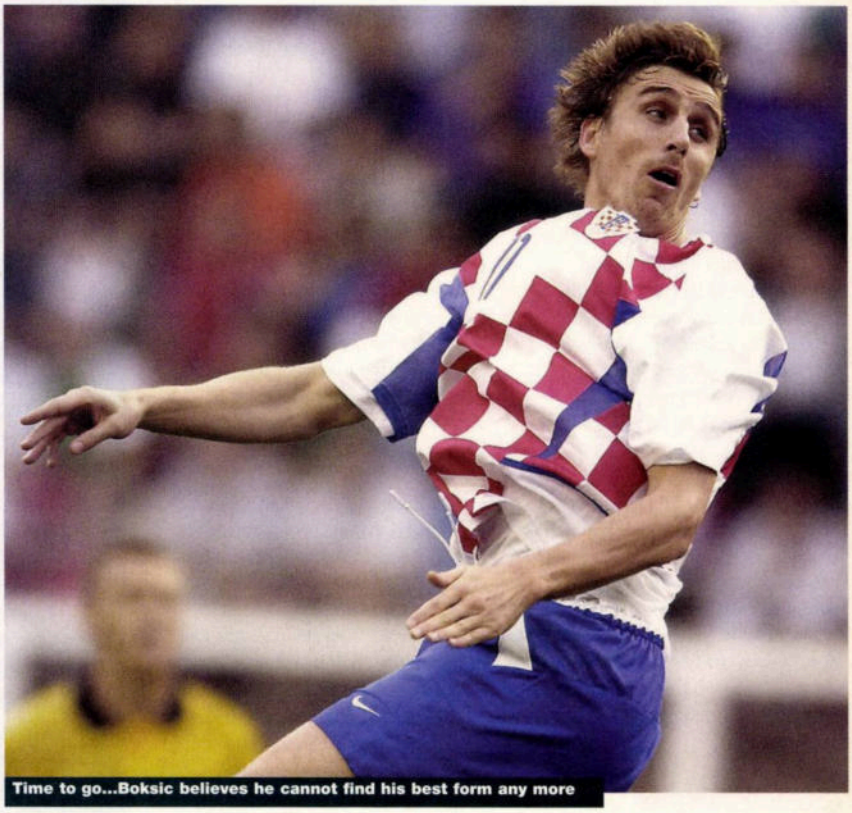
While the recent retirement of all-time top scorer Davor Suker had been expected, Boksic's decision came as a complete surprise, despite his ongoing injury problems, and caused consternation in the national team camp.

Although just turned 34, he is an automatic first choice when fit, so his retirement leaves coach Otto Baric with a headache ahead of the European Championship qualifier at home to Belgium at the end of March.

Boksic, who has been in England with Middlesbrough since summer 2000, said he had been thinking of quitting for some time and wanted to follow the example of former Croatia team-mate Zvonimir Boban in retiring when still able to play.

"There's no need for a drama," said Boksic, who scored 10 goals in 40 appearances for the national side. "It's better for me to quit now while I still have a contract than to offer myself in the summer and wait for someone's offers. I know I would be able to find a place for myself, even at some leading clubs, but above all I want to be fair and say I'm not able to offer my best form any more."

Certainly, the national team can ill afford to do without players of his quality. Croatia have looked quite ordinary in their recent games – a 2-2 draw with Macedonia, when domestic League players were used, and a dull goalless encounter with Poland.



Time to go...Boksic believes he cannot find his best form any more

Goner...Ortega has left Fenerbahce

GREECE

Top clubs face loss of licence

THE government has warned Greek soccer that several top division clubs are in danger of losing their company licences because of their poor financial state. The loss of licence would make them unable to operate in the professional game.

Deputy development minister Christos Theodorou told Parliament that the economic situation at 17 professional clubs – including champions Olympiakos – put them in violation of company law. In Greece, a private company's operating licence can be withdrawn if its capital drops below one-tenth of the value of its initial paid-up equity.

Other top division clubs at risk include AEK Athens, Akratitos, Aris Salonika, Giannina, Aigaleo, PAOK Salonika and Proodeftiki.

Government auditors have been investigating the state of club finances since January, with a full report expected in April.

Meanwhile, FIFA has warned the Greek FA that another First Division side, Panahaiki, should be relegated if they fail to pay off a long-standing debt to Cypriot side AEK Larnaca. Panahaiki owe £118,000, plus 10 per cent interest, for the transfer of Lazaros Iakovou three years ago.

Lou Economopoulos

TURKEY

Revivo straight into gear at Gala

HAIM REVIVO, Galatasaray's winter break signing from Fenerbahce, made a spectacular start at his new club, hitting a hat-trick in the 4-0 win away to Bursaspor. The Israeli left Fener in controversial circumstances, with the club claiming their Istanbul rivals broke a gentleman's agreement not to raid each other for players.

Fener have also lost Argentinian midfielder Ariel Ortega, who is hoping to return to River Plate just nine months after moving to Turkey. "Fenerbahce have not the slightest thing to do with me going," said Ortega, who admitted he had found it hard to adapt to life in Turkey. "My dream is to play for River Plate all my life. I miss the River supporters."

League leaders Besiktas extended their unbeaten run to 21 games since the start of the season after winning their first four matches of the spring campaign. With the club on course for their first title since 1995, Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu has signalled his intention to retire at the top at the end of the season.

Fenerbahce goalkeeper Rustu Recber was Turkey's hero in the goalless draw with Ukraine in Izmir.

Hasan Cemali

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Ethnic divide prompts violence

HOOLIGANISM related to the ethnic divisions within the country has once again marred the domestic game in recent weeks.

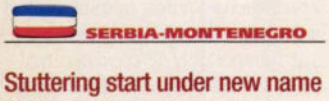
One of the worst incidents came during a match at traditionally Croat club Posusje, when visiting fans of Muslim team Sarajevo began rioting after their side went 2-1 behind. Referee Senad Besic had to abandon the game after Sarajevo supporters started ripping out seats, provoking Posusje fans to retaliate. The match was later awarded as a 3-0 win to Posusje.

Serbian side Borac of Banja Luka

have been ordered to play two home matches behind closed doors after fans shouted insults about Croats and Muslims during the game against Zeljeznicar. Croat side Zrinjski of Mostar were similarly punished after their fans attacked those of city rivals Velez, a traditionally Muslim club.

There was better news on the international front when a Bosnia-Herzegovina team featuring players from all three ethnic groups drew 2-2 with resurgent Wales in Cardiff.

Zdravko Reic



SERBIA-MONTENEGRO

Stuttering start under new name

ONLY a 2-2 home draw against underdogs Azerbaijan in a Euro 2004 qualifier – that was the disappointing outcome of the first international played under the new name Serbia and Montenegro.

The fact that the hosts, formerly Yugoslavia, played without several

Falling out...Mateja Kezman

key players was no excuse for the poor performance of Dejan Savicevic's team in Podgorica.

After the game Mateja Kezman announced that it would be better if he took a rest from the team for a while. The striker fell out with Savicevic after being substituted during the match.

Milos Milutinovic, the former Partizan and Yugoslavia player, has died in Belgrade aged 70. Milutinovic, who scored 16 goals in 33 games for his country, earned the nickname 'the blond top' for his ability to spin past opponents.

Vladimir Novak

Round-up

Prasnikar fights on

SLOVENIA'S national coach Bojan Prasnikar has vowed to stay on despite the side's 5-1 home defeat by Switzerland in a February friendly. "I will continue with my work. I'm sure this team will play better and better," said Prasnikar, whose side had also lost heavily in their previous game, 5-0 away to France in a Euro 2004 qualifier.

Zdravko Reic

MACEDONIAN League leaders Belasica kicked off the spring programme without the services of international midfielder Robert Popov, who has signed a three-year contract with Russian side Shinnik

National coach Nikola Ilievski is likely to introduce only one new player – Groningen's Mile Krstev – for the March Euro 2004 qualifier against Slovakia after a number of new faces failed to pass muster during the 'Marjan' trophy games in Croatia. Macedonia drew 2-2 with the host country, 1-1 with Hajduk Split and lost 3-0 to Poland.

Michel Stojmanovski

Birkirkara stepped up their bold challenge for the **MALTESE** League title with a 7-2 demolition of arch-rivals Valletta in the second round of the play-offs. It put them joint top with Sliema Wanderers, who were held 2-2 at Pieta the same day.

Valletta were without several key players from the autumn campaign. Forward Daniel Bogdanovic has signed for Cherno More in Bulgaria, Gilbert Agius is out for the rest of the season with a groin injury, while Ivan Zammit has been suspended for six months. However, Bulgarian forward Rumen Galabov has signed from PFK Beroe Stara Zagora.

Hamrun Spartans striker Stefan Sultana has become Malta's all-time leading top division goalscorer. His brace in a 3-1 win over Marsaxlokk took his career tally to 174.

David Carabott equalled Carmel Busuttil's record of 114 caps in Malta's 2-2 friendly draw at home to Kazakhstan in February. Coach Sigi Held dropped stalwarts Stefan Giglio and Michael Mifsud for refusing to travel for a friendly against the Balearic Islands in December.

Domenico Aquilina

Pro-file Ivan Ergic

Serb midfielder shining for Basle in Europe

WHERE will bright Basle young thing Ivan Ergic be turning on the midfield style next season? On loan from Italian champions Juventus since summer 2000, the Serbia-Montenegro Under-21 player has been performing so well of late for the Swiss champions that Juve general manager Luciano Moggi must be thinking of recalling him.

But with Juve able to call on a wealth of excellent young prospects, they may decide to send Ergic to another Serie A club or perhaps leave him at Basle for another season.

The Swiss side's fans will not be complaining if he does remain. Ergic, a right-sided midfielder of great pace, poise and relentless activity, has played a key role in the club's recent emergence as a Champions League force.

"What we have achieved in the Champions League is unbelievable," says Ergic. "No one really believed we could beat Celtic in the qualifying round, let alone reach the second group phase. But we showed that we can be a match for anyone on our day.

"Basle is a super place to play football. The fans here give us great support, the atmosphere at our stadium is incredible. I've also gained a lot from the coaching of Christian Gross. He's a hard taskmaster and has done much to help my game and make me more professional."

Born in the Croat town of Sibenik to Serb parents, Ergic has been something of a wanderer. At the age of 10, the outbreak of civil war in the old Yugoslavia prompted he and his family to move to Belgrade. Five years later, they emigrated to Western Australia, where the teenage Ivan began to reveal his footballing prowess. He won a scholarship to the renowned Australian Institute of Sport and then was taken on by top club Perth Glory in 1999.

Ergic would be a Glory Boy for only a season, but what an impact he made. His club reached the 2000 Grand Final, where they lost on penalties to Wollongong Wolves, and he deservedly won the Young Player of the Year award. It was then Juventus stepped in, snapping up Ergic for £1.6 million ahead of the likes of Borussia Dortmund, Hertha Berlin and Leeds, before immediately sending him on loan to Basle.

At international level, Ergic had a difficult choice to make. He was once selected for his adopted land's Under-20 squad. However, he decided to plump for Serbia-Montenegro and his full debut cannot be far away. "Ivan has enormous potential and is developing rapidly," says Serbia-Montenegro boss Dejan Savicevic. "I'm keeping a close eye on him." Savicevic is not the only one.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Basle (Swi)
Country Serbia-Montenegro
Born January 21, 1981, in Sibenik (now Croatia)
Previous clubs Perth Glory (Aus), Juventus (Ita)
Honours Swiss League 2002; Swiss Cup 2002

The East strikes back

New grouping plans rival competition for Champions League rejects

ROMANIA

Out of action...Steaua (red) met Rangers in 1996, the last time a Romanian side made the Champions League group stage

LEADING Eastern European and Mediterranean clubs who have failed to qualify for European cup competitions in recent years are planning to launch their own alternative tournament. Representatives from Rapid, Dinamo and Steaua Bucharest, Olympiakos of Greece, Partizan and Red Star Belgrade, Levski and CSKA Sofia, and APOEL Nicosia met in Bucharest last month to establish the Football Club Cooperation Forum (FCCF).

The FCCF would co-ordinate a competition involving 16 teams from nine countries – Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Serbia-Montenegro (formerly Yugoslavia), Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey and Ukraine – although other countries could still be added to the fold. "The FCCF competition will allow the teams that couldn't qualify for the UEFA Cup and Champions League to continue competing at a professional level," Rapid Bucharest general secretary Cristian Costache told Reuters.

The last Romanian club to qualify for the group stages of the Champions League were Steaua Bucharest in 1996.

However the plan must be submitted to FIFA and UEFA for approval, and they are far from certain to see the virtues of the proposal. "UEFA is sceptical," said Mike Lee, communications director for the European governing body.

New in...Shakhtar's Nenad Lalatovic

UKRAINE

Dynamo fail to sign reinforcements

KYIV DYNAMO president Ihor Surkis has voiced his frustration that the humiliating loss of two key players in controversial transfer deals has prevented the club from bolstering their squad during the winter break.

Dynamo, who lie five points behind leaders Shakhtar Donetsk, failed to buy one player during the transfer window while distracted by their unsuccessful attempt to halt the departure of captain Vladyslav Vaschuk to Moscow Spartak and loss of prospective signing Dmitri Sychev to Marseille.

"I'm very dissatisfied that instead of doing business we've been involved in washing our linen in public," said Surkis, referring to Dynamo's public fury over both moves. The former champions claimed that Vaschuk, who said he was out of contract, had in fact signed a new contract until June 2004 and was not allowed to simply walk away from the club. They also claimed Sychev, formerly with Moscow Spartak, had signed a contract with Dynamo before suddenly joining the French side.

By contrast, Red Star Belgrade skipper Nenad Lalatovic became the third major winter signing at champions Shakhtar. The others were Bulgarian international defender Predrag Pazin from Beijing Guoan and Serbia-Montenegro Under-21 Milan Jovanovic from Vojvodina.

Metalurh Donetsk have appointed Olexander Sevidov as coach to replace Semen Altman, who has returned to his former club, struggling Chornomorets of Odessa.

Oleg Zadernovsky

RUSSIA

Gazzayev retains dual role

NATIONAL team coach Valeri Gazzayev has failed to keep his promise to quit his other job – leading CSKA Moscow – in order to concentrate on Russian duties. But while the international victories keep coming – the latest were over Cyprus and Romania – everybody is turning a blind eye.

There has certainly been no reaction from the Football Union's executive committee, despite the fact it accepted Gazzayev's appointment last summer only on condition that he leave the Army club. The feeling had been that Russia had lacked preparation for the 2002 World Cup under Gazzayev's predecessor, Oleg Romantsev, because he was also coach of Moscow Spartak.

Gazzayev had said he would step down at CSKA at the end of last season, in November. However, the national squad's home victories in the first two Euro 2004 qualifiers in autumn, followed by the 1-0 win over hosts Cyprus and 4-2 win over Romania in a February friendly tournament, made him change his mind. "I see I have enough time to do both," said Gazzayev, adding that he feels that working with CSKA hones his coaching skills.

Veteran Valeri Karpin, enjoying rejuvenated form at Spanish League leaders Real Sociedad, was recalled to the squad having reversed his decision to quit the national team following the poor World Cup last year. There was also a place for 19-year-old Dmitri Sychev, recently signed by Marseille after a four-month ban following his refusal to play for Moscow Spartak.

Victor Gusev

POLAND

Janas makes promising start

NEW national coach Pawel Janas took heart from the performance of his side after they drew 0-0 away to Croatia in Split in his first match in charge. "I am satisfied," said Janas. "It was important for me not to lose in my debut. I can be quite optimistic because the team fought and played with great ambition."

Goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek acknowledged that Janas had

fostered a good spirit within the squad, a feat borne out two days later when a Poland side featuring only domestic League players beat Macedonia 3-0. Ten of those who appeared in that game were winning their first cap, including Rafal Lasocki, the scorer of the final goal.

"A few 'doubles' showed their potential," Janas said after the Macedonia game. "I am sure that I can call on them again for important games as well."

Dariusz Kurowski

CZECH REPUBLIC

Win in France raises hopes

THE national team's 2-0 win away to France in their February friendly provided an encouraging start to the year ahead of the Euro 2004 qualifiers against Austria and Holland.

Sparta's 22-year-old defender Zdenek Grygera opened the scoring after seven minutes at Stade de

First goal...Zdenek Grygera

France, his first international goal, with Liverpool forward Milan Baros sealing the win on the hour.

The result capped a fine week for national boss Karel Bruckner, who had been presented with the Czech Coach of the Year award two days earlier.

Tomas Rosicky of Borussia Dortmund won the Footballer of the Year award for the second year in succession.

Jiri Kotrba's reign as coach of winter champions Sparta got off to a disappointing start after his side lost 1-0 away to Teplice on the first day of the spring campaign. However, they regained ground next time out – winning 1-0 at home against Ceske Budejovice – while closest challengers Slavia were held to a 1-1 draw at Bohemians.

Sparta resumed play without long-time defender and captain Jiri Novotny and midfielder Tomas Cizek, who have both joined newly promoted Russian side Rubin Kazan. Meanwhile, Bohemians forward Lukas Hartig has joined the growing Czech-Slovak enclave at Zenit St Petersburg.

Sam Beckwith

Round-up

Slovan hang on to Vittek

SLOVAKIAN League leaders Slovan Bratislava reinforced their title credentials during the winter break by retaining the services of League top scorer Robert Vittek. The forward, whose 12 goals during the autumn helped Slovan to an eight-point gap at the top, is to stay on at the club after a move to English Premier League side Birmingham fell through. Vittek proved his ability by scoring three goals in Slovakia's two recent friendlies – a 2-1 defeat by Romania and a 3-1 win over the hosts in February's Cyprus Cup tournament.

Ed Holt

High winds and rain caused the half-time abandonment of **HUNGARY'S** Euro 2004 warm-up game against Bulgaria. The Magyars were trailing 1-0 in the February friendly, played in Larnaca, Cyprus.

Joint League leaders Ferencvaros and MTK both strengthened their squads during the winter break – Brazilian forward Velton da Silva joining MTK, and former Dunaferr pair Janos Zovath and Gyorgy Kiss, a midfielder and a defender, both signing for Ferencvaros.

Peterjon Cresswell

The **AZERBAIJAN** FA has fined club sides Garabagh-Azersun and Neftchi Baku £1,250 each after they refused to release players for the national side's February Euro 2004 qualifier away to Serbia-Montenegro.

Vadim Vasilyev of Neftchi and the Garabagh-Azersun trio Aslan Kerimov, Arif Asadov and Agaim Niftaliev were not allowed to play the game – a 2-2 draw – because of the ongoing conflict between many Azeri clubs and the FA president, Fuad Musayev.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Pro-file Zoltan Gera

Hungary's top talent happy to stay home

HOME is where the heart is for Ferencvaros and Hungary attacker Zoltan Gera. Traditionally, any good Hungarian player jumps at the chance to play in a more competitive league. Not Gera, however.

Despite recent attempts by German, French and Turkish sides to sign him – with Galatasaray perhaps the most insistent – the 23-year-old was not for turning. Instead, he opted to extend his contract with Ferencvaros for a further two-and-a-half years, until summer 2005.

"I've strong ties to Ferencvaros and didn't want to break them," explained Gera, who signed from hometown club Pecs in 2000. "I'm happy here and believe Ferencvaros are good for me. At Fradi [Ferencvaros' nickname] I've developed into a good footballer and become an international. We go well together. At the moment I don't feel the need to leave Hungary. Ferencvaros are on the up. We have a fine coach in Joszef Garami and a squad capable of winning trophies. We were championship runners-up last season, and we are all confident it will be our turn to collect the title in a few months."

Ferencvaros have also shown their ambition in other ways. Early this year, they took advantage of Dunaferr's cash crisis to sign Hungarian international striker Thomas Sowunmi. The club have plans to raise more funds by floating on the stock market. "Not only do we want to be Hungary's number one club," says general manager Joszef Szeiler. "Our objective is also to get into the Champions League. To achieve it, we have to strengthen the team. We'll fall down if we sell our best players like Zoltan Gera."

From the moment he burst on to the Magyar scene as a 17-year-old at Pecs, it was clear Gera was a special talent. Usually lined up on the left of attack, his strengths are his balance and ability to dribble his way out of the tightest of spots. Gera has also grown into a composed finisher, and not just at club level – he came off the bench to score a hat-trick for Hungary in their 3-0 Euro 2004 qualifying victory over San Marino last October.

Moreover, he is proof positive that a wayward teenager is not automatically destined for a life of failure. He has admitted once having a drug habit and drinking too much alcohol, but claims he saw the errors of his ways and cleaned up his act. And to what good effect.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Ferencvaros
Country Hungary
Born April 22, 1979, in Pecs
Previous clubs Haikany, Pecs
International debut February 2002, v Switzerland
International caps 8 (3 goals)
Honours Hungarian League 2001

Locals locked in TV hell

The narrow-minded networks are denying Brazilians the best of the action, writes Brian Homewood

BRAZIL

CAN anyone explain the behaviour of Brazil's television moguls? For the past month, the Globo and SBT networks have been engaged in a ruthless legal battle over the rights for the Paulista championship – little more than a pre-season kickaround in which the likes of Sao Paulo, Santos, Corinthians and Palmeiras face their less illustrious neighbours.

Yet not a single network lifted a finger to show Santos, the team all Brazilians love to watch, return to the Libertadores Cup fold after a 19-year absence with a match away to Colombia's America. As a result of this narrowed-minded approach, Brazilian armchair viewers missed a treat. Santos won 5-1, teenage duo Robinho and Diego showed off their full repertoire of tricks and they were given a standing ovation by the home fans as they left the field.

Days later, Globo, having proudly won the latest round in its battle to screen the wretched Paulista, treated viewers to Uniao Sao Joao against Portuguesa – played on a bog of a pitch, under blazing sun, in front of three mangy dogs and six OAPs.

The Santos blackout continued Brazilian television's long tradition of ignoring the Libertadores. In 1997, incredibly, Globo opted not to transmit the first leg of the Final between Peru's Sporting Cristal and Cruzeiro, who are based in Belo Horizonte – only 400 kilometres from Sao Paulo but still away from the Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro mainstream.

Last year, viewers outside Sao Paulo were denied the chance of seeing Sao Caetano – who incredibly rose from Second Division football to Libertadores challengers in only two years – take on Olimpia of Paraguay in the first leg of the Final. Only the second leg was shown nationwide.

In fact, following the collapse of the Pan-American Sports Network cable channel, last year's Libertadores was strictly off limits to viewers in the country that contains more than half of the South American population.

There are two explanations for this strange behaviour. Firstly, the networks assume audiences are only interested in what goes on in their backyard. If, for example, Boca Juniors are playing Santos in the Libertadores Cup Final but Flamengo are playing a Copa Brasil match away to a semi-professional team in some distant corner of the Amazon jungle, viewers in Rio, where Flamengo are based, will be beamed the latter.

Secondly, the networks have no time for the so-called 'little' teams trying to hit the big time through hard work and organisation. So there's no room for the likes of Sao Caetano, and even mid-ranking teams such as Santos and Atletico Paranaense struggle to get televised.

Brazilian viewers are instead fed a diet of Flamengo, Vasco da Gama, Botafogo and Fluminense if they live in Rio, and Sao Paulo, Palmeiras and Corinthians if they live in Sao Paulo. Nothing else.

> 'Globo treated viewers to Uniao Sao Joao v Portuguesa – played in front of three mangy dogs and six OAPs'

When Globo announced last year they would be showing up to five Brazilian championship matches a day, that did not mean viewers would be getting to see more football. It simply meant that the practice would spread and that viewers in Porto Alegre would have no escape from watching either Gremio or Internacional and that those in Belo Horizonte would be watching Cruzeiro and Atletico Mineiro until they were blue in the face.

A further barrier as far as the Libertadores is concerned is the Brazilian tendency to turn their noses up at anything to do with the rest of South America, especially when it comes to football.

Bring on a team from Chile, Peru or Ecuador, and the usual background information from the commentary team is along the lines of: "Yes, well these countries don't have much of a footballing tradition. Their teams are generally weak. They haven't won the World Cup five times like Brazil have. As long as they [the Brazilian team involved] take the game seriously, they should win comfortably."

If the opponents are from Argentina, it's the usual: "Of course, Argentinian teams are very dirty and use a lot of gamesmanship. They like to wind up the opposition, but the Brazilians must not let themselves get provoked." (You need watch only a couple of 60-foul Brazilian matches in which the ball is in play for around 20 minutes and players go tumbling every time they are touched to see the blatant hypocrisy of this type of comment.)

Apart from Globo showing Corinthians matches to viewers in Sao Paulo, Brazilian viewers this year are being rationed to two Libertadores matches a week on the Fox cable channel. Despite this apparently light workload, the commentators, based in a studio in Atlanta, still seem too busy to do their homework. When Paysandu, from northern Brazil, travelled to face Peru's Sporting Cristal in Lima, one commentator said: "And you're watching this match direct from Chile." In another game, the same commentator mispronounced the name of Paraguay's national stadium,

Restricted view...among Brazilians, only Sao Paulo residents saw the first leg of last year's Libertadores Cup Final on TV

Full game...Gilberto Silva v China

Defensores del Chaco, so the final word came out as the Spanish for a female genital organ.

Back in the courtrooms of Sao Paulo, meanwhile, it was all to play for. In the week before the start of the Paulista, the rights to screen the contest changed hands four times in as many days, and both networks ended up screening the opening match – SBT legally, Globo not so legally. Globo won the rights back the following Monday, a decision that SBT initially ignored, then accepted.

SBT, owned by street hawker-turned-gameshow host Silvio Santos, continued the battle, though, and two weeks later the Supreme Tribunal of Justice in Brasilia handed them back the rights. By this time, the competition was halfway through and Globo appeared to have had enough.

Meanwhile, the tournament itself had descended into farce. The first stage ended in furore when Sao Paulo and Santo Andre drew 2-2, a result that sent both teams through from Group 2 and eliminated Santos. Sao Paulo's own fans chanted "it's a fix, it's a fix" as their team let slip a 2-0 lead – a result that would have sent Santos through, not Santo Andre.

"This isn't good for football," said Santos striker Ricardo Oliveira, remembering his team had knocked Sao Paulo out of last year's Brazilian championship in the quarter-finals.

Over in Rio, veteran striker Romario continued to hog the limelight in the Carioca championship. The Fluminense striker hit a hat-trick in a 5-0 win over Botafogo in response to his club president David Fischel threatening to cut his much-publicised privileges following dismal performances in earlier matches. Fluminense then agreed to allow Romario to spend 90 days with a team in Qatar for which he would receive the modest sum of £1million.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) pocketed the same amount after sending their five-times world champions off to China for the friendly with which Carlos Alberto Parreira began his third stint in charge of the team.

Brazil seemed happy just to turn up and take the money as they drew 0-0 against the team they hammered 4-0 at last year's World Cup.

The result was followed by the usual criticisms of the CBF's handling of the team, although on this occasion Ricardo Teixeira's outfit looked fairly angelic when compared to the hypocritical G-14. Hilariously, the grouping of Europe's biggest clubs, once again up in arms about their members being forced by FIFA rules to release Brazilian players, labelled the match as a money-grabbing exercise – which perhaps it was, but certainly no more so than the second phase of the overblown and misnamed Champions League.

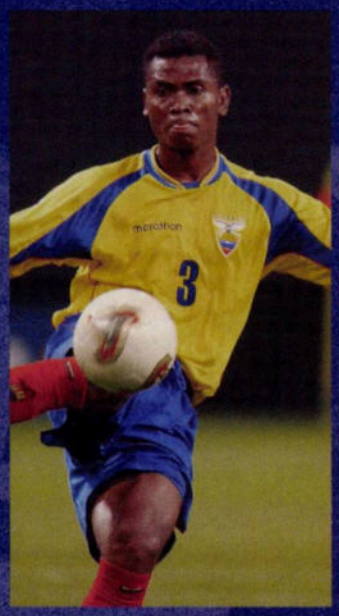
As Parreira pointed out, Brazil were merely exercising their rights under FIFA rules, which allow them to play five friendly internationals a year with all their players available.

In fact, it was quite refreshing to see Parreira refusing, unlike some of his European counterparts, to be bullied by the likes of Arsene Wenger as he kept Arsenal midfielder Gilberto Silva on the field for the full 90 minutes. "We have five dates that are approved by FIFA, so there's nothing to discuss," said Parreira. "As this is a FIFA date, we have the right to field these players, and that's the end of the matter."

Parreira's technical director, Mario Zagallo, also chipped in: "You only get that sort of money if you are five-times champions of the world," he said.

Pro-file Ivan Hurtado

Centurion-in-waiting and the linchpin of Ecuador's defence



SINCE their moment in the World Cup spotlight, Ecuador have been taking time out to honour players winning their 100th cap.

First to cross the line were playmaker Alex Aguinaga and defender Luis Capurro. Their playing days are nearly over, but the same is emphatically not true of the next member of Ecuador's 100 club. Centre-back Ivan Hurtado is still only 28 and the cornerstone of the side as they seek to maintain their momentum.

Now back in Ecuador after seven years in Mexico, Hurtado has time for plenty more caps – and also can still dream of a move across the Atlantic. It was only last year that Ecuador played their first full international in Europe – a 1-0 win over Turkey in Breda, Holland. More are planned, and wider exposure could bring new opportunities for 'Bam Bam' Hurtado.

Seldom has a player's nickname been less appropriate. Rather than being violent or explosive, his method of winning the ball is almost apologetic. With his upright bearing and air of quiet authority, Hurtado dispossesses opposing strikers in the manner of an old-style schoolmaster gently correcting a hard-working student.

He has been giving lessons in clean tackling, sound positioning and crisp distribution ever since he was a teenager pitched into the 1993 Copa America. Hurtado has grown in experience and influence through five South American Championships and three World Cup qualification campaigns. By the time Ecuador finally made it to the World Cup finals last year he was established as team leader and defensive linchpin. Even so, coming up against Christian Vieri in the opening game proved too tall an order. Hurtado was outpaced for the first goal, out-powered for the second, and Italy were two goals up in half an hour. But the reaction to adversity was impressive. Hurtado maintained his self-belief, and once Ecuador had settled they showed they were not out of their depth.

Hurtado captained the side in the other two matches of a tournament that ended on a personal and collective high. The team produced a mature display to beat Croatia 1-0 in their final group match – a win guaranteed by a magnificent saving tackle on Alen Boksic that crowned one of Hurtado's finest displays.

As Ecuador prepare for the next set of qualifiers, Hurtado goes on putting his smooth solidity into the side's defensive mix. His team-mates can rest assured that the country's latest centurion is standing guard.

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club Barcelona (Ecu)
Country Ecuador
Born August 16, 1974, in San Jose Obreros, Esmeraldas
Previous clubs Emelec, Celaya (Mex), Tigres (Mex), La Piedad (Mex)
International debut June 1993, v Venezuela
International caps 99 (5 goals)
Honours Ecuadorean championship 1993, 1994

Pressure mounts on Pellegrini

River's coach has agreed to changes after a poor closing start, writes Eric Weil

ARGENTINA

Trying times...Pellegrini must go back to the drawing board to revive River Plate

RIVER PLATE fans have been screaming for the head of Chilean coach Manuel Pellegrini after the team took only one point from their first two games of the closing championship.

River scraped a 2-2 draw away to Newell's Old Boys on the opening weekend with a last-minute equaliser, only to lose 1-0 at home to Velez Sarsfield, with the visitors' goal also coming at the death.

Pellegrini, who was signed after winning the League and Mercosur Cup with San Lorenzo, has never gained popularity at River. Now he has had to face up to the fact that, although on paper he possesses the strongest squad in Argentina, his 4-2-2-2 formation is not working.

"We'll have to revise everything we have been doing, because we have the players to do much better," Pellegrini admitted. "A coach has 95 per cent of the responsibility in preparing the team, but only five per cent during the actual match."

River did finally win in the third round, 2-0 away to Colon Santa Fe, but the storm clouds are still looming.

One likely victim of the poor results is goalkeeper Angel Comizzo, who, at 40, is the oldest player in the championship. After making so many vital saves last year, he has already made a number of mistakes this time and is in danger of losing his place. However, Pellegrini is not blessed with alternatives. Jose Buljubasich has not impressed, while Franco Costanzo and German Lux lack experience.

Meanwhile, River have been attempting to re-sign Argentina forward Ariel Ortega after his brief stay in Turkey with Fenerbahce. However, the problem is cash. Fener paid £5 million for the player at the start of the 2002-03 season but River cannot afford a buy-back. Their most recent offer was £700,000 for an 18-month loan.

There is a far rosier picture at Racing Club, who won their first three games to lie joint top of the embryonic League table with Velez. Coach Osvaldo Ardiles, a World Cup winner with Argentina in 1978, is confident his side can now be candidates for the League and the Libertadores Cup after showing only moderate form during the opening campaign. "When I was appointed only three days before the season started I didn't know the players, while all the team changes had been made by other people," says Ardiles. "Now I have the players I want, I chose the players to strengthen the squad and I can consider it really my team."

The coach, who has former Argentina and Tottenham team-mate Ricardo Villa as his assistant, can call upon international-class goalkeeper Gustavo Campagnuolo and an array of pacy, attacking players such as Sixto Peralta, Milovan Mirosevic, Mariano Gonzalez, Maximiliano Estevez, Diego Milito, Luis Rueda and Facundo Bonvin.

The latter is on loan from Boca Juniors, who suffered an early League defeat away to Union Santa Fe. The demands of the Libertadores Cup forced Boca coach Carlos Bianchi to make seven changes to the side who beat Colombia's Independiente Medellin 2-0 three days earlier. It proved too big an upheaval, with Union winning 2-0 thanks to goals from former Boca player Luis Islas.

Opening championship winners Independiente were the only side without a point after three rounds. They had also failed to score in any of the defeats.

MEXICO

Inconsistency reigns

NO side remained unbeaten after seven rounds of the closing championship, giving some indication of the lack of consistency in the League so far.

Opening champions Toluca recovered after their poor start, beating Monterrey and Colibries to go second in Group 1 behind America. The team is beginning to gel well under new coach Alberto Jorge, the club's former youth programme boss, while last season's League top goalscorer Jose Cardozo had already taken his tally to eight.

Only Atlante's Chilean forward, Sebastian Gonzalez, could top that figure, his total of 11 goals including five from one game – the 5-1 victory over Jaguares – a record since the short-league system was introduced.

America have the League's best keeper in Adolfo Rios, but appear hampered by playing striker Cuauhtemoc Blanco in a playmaker role, where he is clearly unhappy.

Monterrey's defeat by Toluca was their only one of the early rounds, evidence that Daniel Passarella's side are finally fulfilling the expectations of the country's most loyal fans.

Monterrey, who topped Group 2, have won only one title in more than 50 years, but their average home attendance over the past decade is more than 30,000.

Guadalajara, under new coach Eduardo De la Torre – whose father Javier led the club to seven titles in the 1960s – have been playing surprisingly well to top Group 4.

Participation in the Libertadores Cup has clearly affected the domestic form of Pumas UNAM and Cruz Azul, who had just one win between them after seven rounds. There is also a marked decline in quality in the top division, a reflection of the decision to increase the number of clubs from 18 to 20. Significantly, Veracruz and Jaguares, promoted to take the extra berths, are among those battling against relegation.

The dearth of capable Mexican strikers was reflected when the national team lost 1-0 to Argentina and were held to a 0-0 draw by Colombia as they began preparations for July's Gold Cup in the United States.

Carlos Ramirez

Unhappy...Cuauhtemoc Blanco

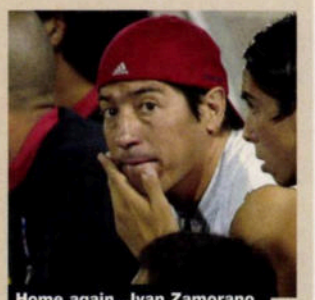
S American round-up

Less money for Libertadores

PRIZE money in the **LIBERTADORES CUP** has been reduced for the second year running after South America's economic recession forced television to cut payments for the rights. The winners will take home £1.7million compared to £3.4m two years ago.

URUGUAY: The format of the First Division has been changed again. In place of last season's classification stage, leading to short, nine-team opening and closing championships, all 18 teams play each other once in opening and closing campaigns. A club winning both will automatically become overall champions, otherwise the two campaign winners will play off against each other, plus the winner of the overall points table if not one of the championship winners.

CHILE: Former international striker Ivan Zamorano, 36, made a superb start at Colo Colo, scoring in each of his first three games for the champions after returning to his homeland from a decade and a half in Spain, Italy and Mexico. Zamorano



Home again...Ivan Zamorano

is also back on the international scene, but now as technical adviser to new coach Juvenal Olmos.

ECUADOR: The start of the championship was delayed when referees went on strike for a 40 per cent pay rise. In response, the FA threatened to suspend them for not turning up at games.

COLOMBIA: Deportes Tolima and Quindio were both forced to postpone their first two League matches due to severe financial problems. Tolima even asked permission to withdraw, but the League refused. Defending champions America were joint top with Bucaramanga after five rounds.

Eric Weil

Pro-file Pablo Mastroeni

US midfielder born in Argentina, raised in Arizona, impressing Bruce Arena

BORN in Argentina in 1976, Pablo Mastroeni had little time to become an Argentinian. He was barely four years old when his parents emigrated to Phoenix in the United States.

The Arizona city is hardly the centre of the football universe, but Mastroeni got lucky. He joined a youth team run by another immigrant, Luis Dabo from Guinea-Bissau, who had played professionally in Portugal. Dabo, who wanted his 10-year-olds to play like Brazilians, called his team Phoenix Santos – and his star turn was Mastroeni, a free-spirited, goal-scoring forward.

When college time arrived, Mastroeni chose North Carolina State University, mostly because the coach there was George Tarantini, brother of Argentina's World Cup-winning defender Alberto.

Four years later, in 1998, Mastroeni emerged with a degree in sports communications to a world where suddenly everything was new. He had a new playing position: as a defender, or maybe a defensive midfielder; he was about to start a new life as a pro soccer player; and the club he joined, Miami Fusion, was a brand new team, formed only that year.

Fusion didn't stay around for too long, folding after the 2001 season, and Mastroeni was picked up by Colorado Rapids. By that time he had already drawn the interest of national coach Bruce Arena, and gained his first cap in a friendly with Ecuador.

Although Mastroeni did not play in any qualifiers for last year's World Cup, his strong performances for Fusion and Rapids were enough to secure him a place in the squad for the finals. When captain Claudio Reyna was ruled unfit for the opening game, against Portugal, Mastroeni was named as a starter and played a huge role in the 3-2 upset win.

With Reyna fit for the second game, against South Korea, Mastroeni was back on the bench and for the final group match, against Poland. But, with Arena unhappy that the latter tie ended in a 3-1 loss, he was recalled for the knockout stages. Mastroeni's solid play in the 2-0 win over Mexico and the 1-0 quarter-final loss to Germany have made him a fixture, if not in the team, then certainly in the squad.

"He was a pleasant surprise at the World Cup," says Arena. "Clearly, in defensive midfield he's a good ball winner and he has a good workrate. He still lacks experience at international level, but he

understands his role well, he's very fit and he has a great attitude – he's easy-going and very popular among team-mates. His tackling is excellent because he anticipates well. He passes quite well, with an ability to deliver a long ball. He's comfortable going forward, and he's intelligent about it. He's also a candidate for right-back."

"Currently defensive midfield is my preferred position," says Mastroeni. "It brings more variables; you're not always facing the game like you are at the back. It's a lot more challenging."

His favourite player is Argentina midfielder Diego Simeone. "That's who I model myself on," he says. "He's an honest central midfielder, good with the ball, and I like his dedication. I've come to admire him more since I became a pro – before that I don't think I appreciated the hard work part!

"My strengths are my ability to cover ground; I feel comfortable with the ball at my feet, and I can distribute pretty well. But I'm still learning. My biggest fault is that I have a tendency to be over-aggressive, to over-commit."

Mastroeni admits that his father Frank complains about the lost attacking skills. Maybe the new season will bring a change. "This year with Colorado we're playing with four in midfield," he says. "So I think there may be a good opportunity to work on the attacking side, maybe bring back some of that old stuff I had – back when I used to score goals."

Paul Gardner

Fact file

Club Colorado Rapids
Country United States
Born August 26, 1976, in Argentina
Previous clubs Miami Fusion
International debut June 2001, v Ecuador
International caps 13 (0 goals)

Kings from Cairo...Zamalek celebrate victory in the African Super Cup

Zamalek extend Egypt's run

Mark Gleeson witnesses another triumph for the Cairo side

AFRICAN SUPER CUP

EGYPTIAN clubs have retained their grip on the African Super Cup, with Zamalek following on from great Cairo rivals Al Ahly – winners for the past two years – in triumphing in the annual match-up between the holders of the continent's two biggest club competition trophies.

Zamalek cruised to a record third triumph, beating Morocco's Wydad Casablanca 3-1 in Cairo to win an unprecedented ninth African club competition.

The Egyptians, who won the African Champions League last year, overcame an early storm to easily see off their North African rivals. The opening goal for Zamalek came on 29 minutes with Ahmed Saleh's astute pass allowing Mohamed Abdel Wahed to run at the Wydad defence and crack home a powerful left-footed shot from the edge of the box.

Wydad had two easy chances in the first 15 minutes when Redouane Allali had his close-range shot saved by Zamalek keeper Abdelwahed El-Sayed and then Khalid Khamma's header was cleared off the line.

Saleh was again the provider for the second goal in the 63rd minute, setting Abdelhalim Ali clear on the right wing to provide a cross for captain Hazem Emam to tap into an empty net after Wydad goalkeeper Tarek El-Jarmouni mistimed an attempt to cut out the square pass.

Ali then added a goal of his own two minutes later, cutting inside defender Mustapha Talha on the edge of the area and squeezing the ball past El-Jarmouni.

By the time Wydad grabbed a consolation goal 11 minutes from the end, the contest was effectively over. Abdelhak Ait Laarif's shot on the edge of the area hit his Ivorian team-mate Guillaume Dah Zady, who had the presence of mind to swivel and strike the ball into the net.

COSAFA CASTLE CUP

Madagascar progress

THE Cosafa Castle Cup, the competition for southern African countries, has entered its seventh year, with Madagascar drawing first blood in the 2003 edition.

The Malagasy, playing at home for the first time in the competition's history, edged out Mauritius 2-1 in the Indian Ocean island derby to claim a quarter-final place. It was a third straight win for Madagascar, who are looking much more competitive under new Swiss coach Hans Heiniger.

Mauritius conceded a silly penalty early on and then gave away a second goal from a long-range free-kick. However, they did fight back in the second half, with Kersley Appou's diving header reducing the deficit.

Madagascar now go into the last eight along with holders South Africa, last year's runners-up Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia, who all received byes. The other three competitors will be the winners of the ties between Namibia and Botswana, Mozambique and Lesotho, and Zimbabwe and Angola.

Mark Gleeson

ALL-AFRICA GAMES

Last eight in place

NIGERIA will host the All-Africa Games in Abuja in October – presuming they finish the preparations on time – and the football tournament is sure to be one of the better attended events.

The players have done their bit by ensuring eight competitive teams have made it through the qualifiers, which were beset by withdrawals and a lack of interest. Now the organisers have to ensure facilities will be in place for the tournament.

Nigeria qualified automatically as hosts, while Ghana did not have to kick a ball to qualify either after Ivory Coast pulled out of their regional play-off. Egypt overcame Kenya to qualify from their zone, and Cameroon had an easy run, too, with only Rwanda offering any resistance.

Senegal won away in Guinea and Mali to come out top in the far west African zone, while Algeria won the north African zone by beating Libya.

South Africa and Zambia qualified after a tough southern Africa section. Bafana Bafana overcame Angola 4-2 on aggregate with three goals from new star Lesley Manyathela. Zambia beat Zimbabwe on away goals after a 2-2 aggregate draw.

Mark Gleeson

Round-up

Michel takes Raja reins

Casablanca choice...Henri Michel

HENRI MICHEL, who spent four years as coach of **MOROCCO**, has taken over from Belgian Walter Meeuws at Raja Casablanca, runners-up in last year's African Champions League.

Meanwhile, the club were fined £100,000 by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) for incidents during the 2002 Final. These included wearing the logo of a rival sponsor on their shirt. Winners Zamalek of **EGYPT** received a £83,000 fine for poor organisation of the second leg in Cairo.

Elsewhere in **NORTH AFRICA**, Abubaker Bani has returned to his former post as coach of **LIBYA**, replacing Italian Francesco Scoglio, now at Napoli in Serie B.

Former **TUNISIA** captain Khaled Ben Yahia is the new coach of ES Zarzis.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Cup holders Mount Cameroon defeated League champions Canon Yaounde 2-0 to win the Super Cup in **CAMEROON**.

Argentinian Jorge Warnicke is the new coach of **EQUATORIAL GUINEA**.

EAST AFRICA

SC Villa of **UGANDA** won the annual East and Central African Club Championship, beating Tanzania's Simba 1-0 in a heated Final in Kampala.

Defending champions AC Nakuru were kicked out of **KENYA'S** Premier League after failing to show up for three successive League matches. The club, previously known as Oserian Fastac, have been in financial trouble since the withdrawal of their sponsors. Coach Edward Manoah has since left the club for AFC Leopards of Nairobi.

German Michael Nees is the new coach of the **SEYCHELLES**, replacing French World Cup player Dominique Bathenay, who has gone to Sedan in his homeland.

The island archipelago of the **COMORES** is set to become the 53rd member of CAF. It is the last of the continent's independent countries not to be part of the world's footballing fraternity.

TANZANIA have appointed Msindo Msolla as their new national coach.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

LESOTHO coach Monaheng Monyane has resigned after just six months in charge, claiming his work was being hindered by FA officials. It was Monyane's second spell with the country.

Mandla Dlamini is the new man in charge of **SWAZILAND**. His predecessor, Dumisa Mahlalela, attempted to commit suicide in December over what officials said was a "personal matter".

SOUTH AFRICAN international winger Japhet Zwane has left Moroka Swallows to join Russian club Rostselmash.

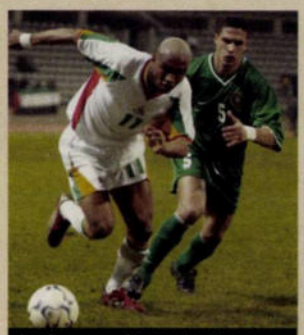
AS Aviacao striker Lolo, who has since moved to Belenenses in Portugal, has been named as **ANGOLA'S** Footballer of the Year for 2002. His former club won the Super Cup with a shoot-out victory over Petro Atletico in Luanda.

Former Wimbledon reserve team manager Alan Gillett has taken charge of **MALAWI** on a four-month contract.

WEST AFRICA

The start of the championship in **IVORY COAST** had to be delayed by several weeks because of the civil strife in the country. Champions ASEC Abidjan have sold star striker Tony Koutouan to Al Wahda in the United Arab Emirates.

Guy Stephan lost his first match in charge of **SENEGAL**, the World Cup quarter-finalists beaten 1-0 by Morocco in a friendly played in Paris.


Losing run...Senegal v Morocco

Former African Footballer of the Year Abdul Razak is the new coach of **GHANA'S** Asante Kotoko.

Brazilian Jose Antonio Nogueira is the new coach of **SIERRA LEONE**.

Mark Gleeson

Pro-file Steven Pienaar

Streetwise young South African wowing Europe with Ajax

JOHAN CRUYFF and Patrick Vieira are among his admirers, and Ajax coach Ronald Koeman says: "I need clever players in my team and that is why he plays." Steven Pienaar, the 21-year-old South African midfielder, has received rave reviews during his first full season at Ajax, particularly for his performances in the UEFA Champions League.

He battled with aplomb against the likes of Vieira in central midfield during the recent 1-1 draw away to Arsenal, while earlier in the competition he mesmerised Roma when playing on the left side. Cruyff called him the best player on the pitch at Highbury, and Vieira believes "he's a player with a great future".

Yet Pienaar cannot get into his own national side. South Africa have capped the youngster just once, in a World Cup warm-up against Turkey, deciding not to use him during the finals. But the lack of international call-ups have worked in his favour, allowing him to use the time he would have spent on national team duty to continue to impress Ajax coach Ronald Koeman. After making just eight starts during Ajax's Double-winning season last year, Pienaar has become a regular this term. "My biggest quality is that I'm a real team player, plus I'm able to do things opponents do not expect," he says. "But I still have a lot to learn."

The midfielder grew up in Westbury, a tough township near Johannesburg, where gangs rule the streets and teenage expectations are limited. But it was the nature of ghetto life that forced Pienaar to hone his skills at an early age. He played for street teams in matches at which betting was the top priority. "We were poor and needed money so we played in those stake games, but they almost always ended in massive fist fights," Pienaar recalls. "We needed to have good footballers in our side but also players who knew how to fight."

Pienaar became a regular in South Africa's Under-17 and Under-20 teams but it took a long time before any professional clubs sought to sign him. Ajax Cape Town eventually gave him a contract and, soon after, a chance to go on trial to their mother club in Holland. But Pienaar returned home without a contract after two weeks at Ajax.

It was only when he went back to play for Ajax Cape Town in a youth tournament in Groningen in July 2000 that the scouts from Amsterdam realised just what their affiliate club had on their books.

Mark Gleeson

Fact file

Club Ajax (Hol)
Country South Africa
Born March 17, 1982, in Johannesburg
Previous club Ajax Cape Town
International debut May 2002, v Turkey
International caps 1 (0 goals)
Honours Dutch League 2002; Dutch Cup 2002

Antlers outdo the champions

The J.League side triumph against the odds on home soil. Mike Plastow & Tsutomu Yamada report

Where is it?...Antlers' Akita (right) and Songnam's Kim Dae-eui

FAR EAST CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

KASHIMA ANTLERS consigned last season's indifferent form to history as they marched to victory in the inaugural Far East Club Championship against the champions of China, South Korea and Japan.

Antlers were the only non-champions in the four-team tournament, qualifying as Japan's League Cup holders because the country, as hosts, were given two berths. But they beat Dalian Shide of China 3-1 and their own J.League conquerers Jubilo Iwata 2-0 before drawing 0-0 with South Korea's Songnam Chunma to take the trophy.

Toninho Cerezo's side finished a long way behind Jubilo in last season's J.League, but it was the Iwata side who experienced all the problems this time. The club, who became the first to win both J.League stages in a season last year, lost all three games and failed to score a goal.

"All champion clubs go through periods of searching, when nothing seems to go right," said Cerezo. "Now it is Jubilo's turn. But this result has shown we are ready to be champions."

The competition was launched with the aim of further developing Far Eastern football in the wake of the 2002 World Cup. It will now rotate venues, with China due to stage it in 2004 and South Korea the following year.

Antlers played without injured national team keeper Hitoshi Sogahata but with a much-improved back line. The return of Naoki Soma from Tokyo Verdy 1969 and the signing of Go Oiwa from Jubilo Iwata have plugged last year's gaps. Together with Akira Narahashi and Yutaka Akita, the Player of the Tournament, this may well prove the core of the national team defence.

There were promising performances, too, from new Brazilian midfielder Fernando, Brazilian striker Euller, now fully recovered from injury, and new captain Koji Nakata.

Dalian can be proud of their second-place finish, having defeated Songnam 3-2 and Jubilo 1-0 with what manager Milorad Kosanovic called, with only slight exaggeration, "the youngest team in the world". Kosanovic brought 11 players aged 22 or younger, including five Olympic team members, though it was a hat-trick from veteran Hao Haidong that sealed the victory over the Korean champions.

Songnam, the biggest-spending Korean club, had a disappointing tournament. Spearheaded by former J.League players Kim Do-hoon, Kim Dae-eui and Sasa Drakulic, they looked favourites after beating Jubilo 2-0 in their opening game. But the loss to Dalian left them needing to beat Antlers by two goals, and the best attack in the tournament ran aground on the best defence.

As for Jubilo, new coach Masaaki Yanagishita clearly has a lot to do. Naohiro Takahara's move to Hamburg has left a glaring gap up front, and the question now is how this setback will affect Jubilo's defence of their J.League title.

Asian round-up

Romario gamble in doubt

QATAR champions Al Saad have signed 37-year-old Brazilian World Cup-winning striker Romario on a three-month loan to bolster their bid for this year's Asian Champions League – but their £1million investment may have backfired.

Champions League rules state players must be on contracts no shorter than six months and be registered with the Asian Football Confederation a month before the start of the group stage, scheduled for March 9.

AFC general secretary Peter Velappan warned: "We will not bend the rules for anyone. Clubs must ensure all documentation pertaining to their registered players is in order."

Al Saad's group rivals Al Hilal of **SAUDI ARABIA** recently secured the services of former Manchester United winger Andrei Kanchelskis and Cameroon forward Patrick Suffo.

The exodus has continued from Asian club champions Suwon Bluewings, with Ko Jong-su the latest big name to defect from the former **SOUTH KOREAN** title holders. Ko, who played at France 98, has signed for Japan's Kyoto Purple Sanga. His departure follows those of Lee Ki-hyung and Denis Laktionov, both to K-League champions Songnam Chunma, and Brazilian forward Sandro Cardoso, who joined Japan's JEF United Ichihara.

Englishman Peter Withe will remain **THAILAND'S** national coach after receiving the backing of FA president Vijit Getkaew. The former Aston Villa forward, who has been in charge since 1998, was due to sign a new contract before reports surfaced that approaches had been made to local coach Chatchai Phaholpaet.

The Englishman has been Thailand's most successful coach, guiding them to the Asian Cup finals in Lebanon in 2000, the semi-finals of the Asian Games in 1998 and to victory in the Tiger Cup in 2000 and 2002.

Sweden claimed the 34th King's Cup title in Bangkok, hammering **NORTH KOREA** 4-0 in the Final.

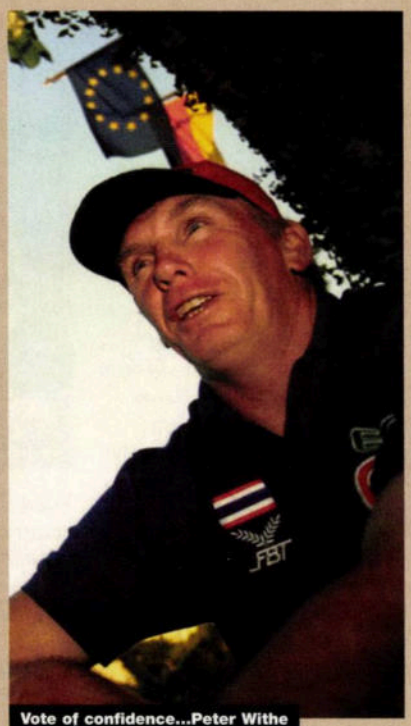
Sepahan maintained their 10-point lead in the **IRANIAN** League despite being held to a 1-1 draw by Abu Moslem at the end of February. The national team lost on penalties to Uruguay in the Final of the Lunar New Year tournament in Hong Kong.

Dhofar had a one-point lead at the top of the standings at the halfway stage in **OMAN**.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES side Al Jazeira have fired Dutch coach Jan Verslygn after recording just five wins in 16 League games.

Calcutta-based East Bengal Club are well poised to regain the **INDIAN** League title after beating arch-rivals Mohun Bagan 2-1.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood



Vote of confidence...Peter Withe

All for nothing...Perth Glory (white) had their 2-0 win over Parramatta wiped out

OCEANIA

Glory blow golden chance

PERTH GLORY squandered a golden opportunity to effectively sew up **AUSTRALIA'S** regular season title when losing 1-0 at home to closest challengers Sydney Olympic.

The result allowed Olympic, who beat Glory by the same score in last year's Grand Final, to go a point clear at the top with two matches to play, though Glory had a game in hand.

Olympic's win was an encouraging start for Lee Sterrey, who succeeded 2002 championship-winning coach Gary Phillips less than a week earlier. Phillips left after the Sydneysiders suffered a downturn in form.

Glory's progress was further hampered when their 2-0 opening day victory over Parramatta Power was reversed to a 3-0 defeat after they fielded an unregistered player.

Olympic, Glory and Newcastle were the only definite qualifiers for the championship play-offs with two regular season rounds to go. Parramatta, Adelaide City, Northern Spirit and South Melbourne were battling for the other three places.

Eddie Thomson, Australian soccer's most honoured coach, has died of cancer at 55. Thomson led Sydney City to three successive championships in the 1980s and was named Coach of the Year in 1981, 1984 and 1985. He went on to manage Sydney Olympic after City folded before taking charge of the national side for six years, starting in 1990. Thomson, who was a central defender for Hearts and Aberdeen in his native Scotland during his playing days, was latterly coach of Japanese side Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

The 2001 **NEW ZEALAND** champions Central United are back on top of the table after a disappointing seventh-place finish last season.

North Shore United forward Davis Haule, signed from English non-League side Harrow Borough, had a debut double hat-trick annulled after his side's 7-2 victory over Napier City Rovers was changed to a 3-0 defeat because they fielded too many foreign players. Ironically, it was Haule's presence that took North Shore above the three-foreigner limit.

To add salt to the club's wounds, the forfeited points dropped them to bottom of the table after four rounds.

Ba extended their extraordinary record in **FIJI'S** season-opening Champion v Champion Series by winning a 10th consecutive crown. The League champions thumped Inter Districts title-holders Nadi 7-1 on aggregate.

Paul Moon

CHINA

Haan off to solid start

CHINA kicked off life under new coach Arie Haan by holding world champions Brazil to a 0-0 draw in Guangzhou and then followed up with a 1-0 win over Estonia. The Dutchman, who took the helm in January, was quick to stress his intention to alter the team's style of play after two years under predecessor Bora Milutinovic. "I am a different coach to Bora," said Haan. "Our training methods are different and my priority is to introduce a Dutch style to the players.

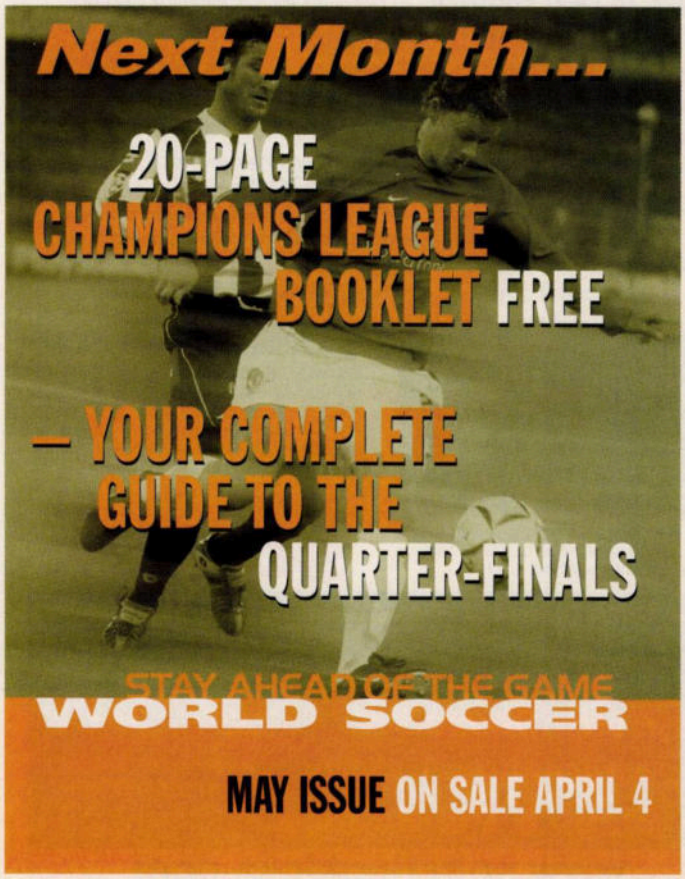
"I am delighted to be in China. I have only been here a couple of weeks and have been pleasantly surprised by many things, especially the national team."

Another European expressing delight in his new surroundings is Shanghai Shenhua's signing Jorg Albertz. The former Rangers and Hamburg midfielder joined the nation's richest club in January in time for the group stages of the Asian Champions League. "The facilities are very complete and are much better than what I had expected," said Albertz. "In fact, they are better than many of the clubs in Germany, and I can imagine what the atmosphere is like in a packed stadium."

Also moving to China is Paraguayan international striker Nelson Cuevas, who has signed for Shanghai Zhongyuan from Argentina's River Plate on a year's loan deal worth £370,000.

League champions Dalian Shide picked up where they left off last season with a 1-0 win over FA Cup winners Qingdao Yizhong in the Chinese Super Cup. Veteran international Hao Haidong scored the goal.

Michael Church



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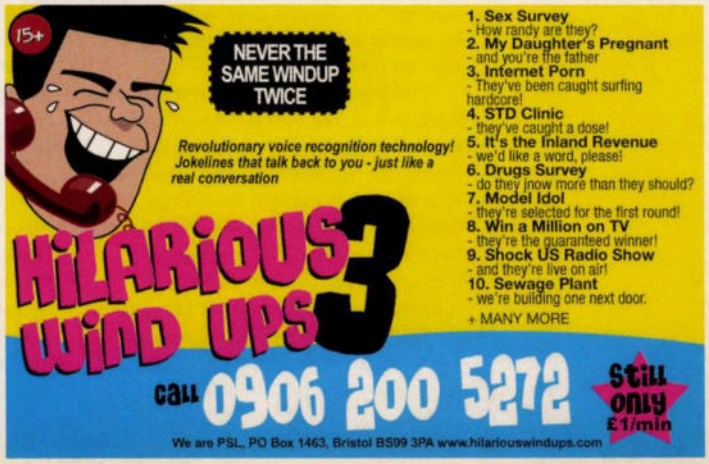

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

Still in service...Rune Hauge continues to work with leading clubs

'If the agents emerge wretchedly, then clubs and managers are perhaps ultimately to blame for dealing with them'

Agents remain law to themselves

ALL SORTS of slimy creatures crawl out from under stones in Tom Bower's typically well researched expose, *Broken Dreams: Vanity, Greed and the Souring of English Football*.

It has long been an open secret that the relationship between certain agents and certain clubs or managers has been unhealthy, but here is abundant chapter and verse. If the agents, with very few exceptions, emerge wretchedly, shamefully ready to home in on potential transfers when they initially have no connection at all with the players involved, then clubs and managers are perhaps ultimately to blame for dealing with them and, in some cases, even for conniving with them.

That Rune Hauge should be still used by leading clubs, not least by Peter Ridsdale, the chairman of Leeds, passes belief. Hauge, the Norwegian wheeler-dealer, was after all bang to rights in the George Graham affair when the £400,000 he had so generously given the then Arsenal manager earned Graham a one-year suspension, which still seems lenient indeed.

Time and again we find instances of agents apparently working hand in glove with certain managers. If, as has been suggested, nothing strictly illegal has gone on, then much of what Bower exposes is surely strictly immoral. I hope by the time you read this, Ridsdale will have satisfactorily explained why he, and Leeds, paid Hauge a colossal 10 per cent bonus, which was originally to be 5 per cent, after Leeds had signed Rio Ferdinand from West Ham with minimal assistance from the Norwegian.

In an ideal football world, managers and directors would keep agents at arm's length, seeing them as no better than necessary evils. Where they are necessary at all. Yet I confess that, initially, the idea of agents, at first strongly opposed here by the soccer authorities, seemed reasonable enough to me, above all because they could protect very young players from the wiles and exploitation of certain clubs.

Alas, it has all gone far beyond that, and the difficulties of the Football Association successfully intervening was shown when they tried to impugn one of the most, shall we say, successful agents, Dennis Roach, friend of Glenn Hoddle, only to find that their writ didn't run and that the case had to go to FIFA. That famously incorruptible body.

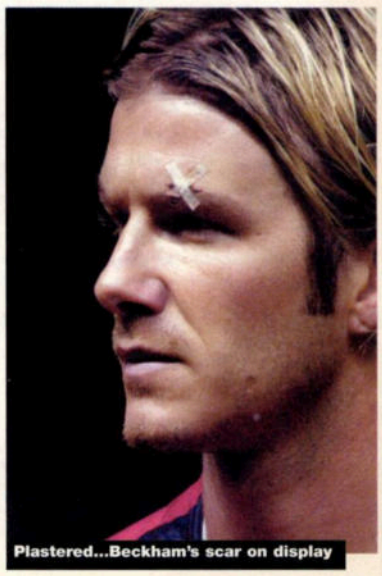
Ferguson carries on bullying

AH, Alex Ferguson and the saga of the flying boot. How cheap and absurd it was to try, as some did, to put the blame on David Beckham, for his silent protest, displaying his plastered brow for the world to see. Such behaviour was surely a great deal more dignified than Ferguson's silly piece of immature petulance, the eternal bad loser, kicking that boot across the dressing-room.

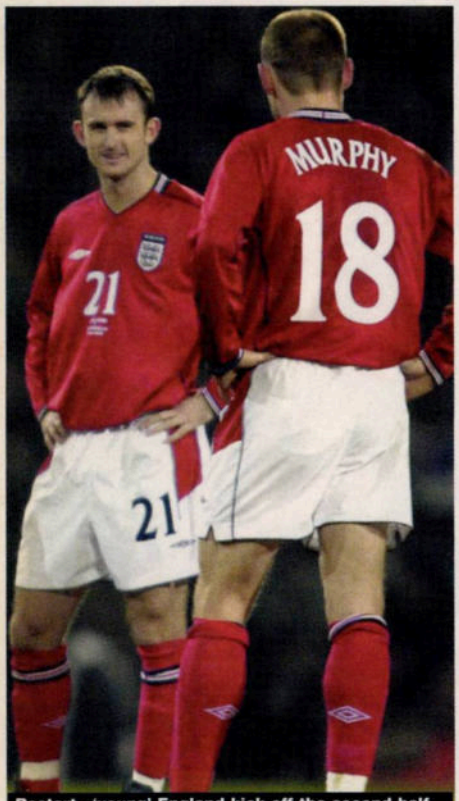
What amazes me, and I suppose it is some kind of left-handed tribute to the apoplectic Ferguson, is that by and large he has been able over the years to get away with such bullying behaviour; the so-called 'hair dryer treatment' of shouting into a hapless player's face. The conventional wisdom has long been that contemporary players, paid beyond the dreams of avarice, simply won't put up with managerial authoritarianism. Indeed, that managers today have a hopeless task in keeping their players in line.

Long ago, Eddie Hapgood, captain of Arsenal and England in the 1930s, told me that the paternalistic Herbert Chapman "told you how to dress, told you how to do your hair". When I repeated this to Hapgood's former team-mate George Male, he responded that players might say: "Well, I'm not staying there for that."

Several decades on, it seems that Fergie is the triumphant, unreconstructed exception that proves the rule.



Plastered...Beckham's scar on display



Restart...'young' England kick off the second half

Eriksson fails in game of two teams

BY general agreement, Sven Goran Eriksson cut a dismally feeble figure over the recent England-Australia debacle at Upton Park. True, the fixture came at a very delicate time both for Arsenal and Manchester United, due to meet in the FA Cup at Old Trafford the previous Saturday and to play Champions League games the following week. But to promise in advance that the "real" England team would play only the first half, to be replaced in the second by a bunch of youngsters, was a craven dereliction of responsibility.

In the event England's younger, secondary team did better than the seniors, drawing the second half 1-1 after their elders and allegedly betters had lost the first, 2-0. But the way to bring on young international talent is to embed it in a team of experienced players.

Former Arsenal player Alan Smith, once an England centre-forward himself, was right to stress that totally changing the team at half-time robbed midfielder Frank Lampard and debutant centre-forward James Beattie of the chance to impose themselves in the second period.

Fearful Eriksson had right on his side. He should simply have told the ever-erupting Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger – who seemed to have nothing to say about so many of his players being called up by France – to grin and bear it.

The Swede's subsequent attempts to mollify such critics by suggesting that all friendly internationals be played at the end of the season made no real sense. In any case, the early summer, apart from post-World Cup years, is traditionally the time when England teams tour abroad.

The clubs, in fact, have made a rod for their own backs with the greedy way they have transformed the once straightforward home and away knockout European Cup into an endlessly drawn out so-called Champions League, eliminating the Cup-winners Cup in the process. There have been howls of pain over UEFA's decision to do away with the second group stage, but the fact is that the major clubs are hoist with their own petard, their ludicrous expenditure on salaries – even if the transfer market has been radically depressed.

Exploding the myths of war

SIMON KUPER is one of the most interesting writers about football, and his latest book, *Ajax, The Dutch, The War*, is characteristically original, stimulating and well founded. Kuper uses Ajax as a kind of stalking horse for his analysis of Dutch behaviour during the war. He doesn't admire it, calling Holland then "cowardly and grey", decrying the myth that the Dutch behaved with gallant self-sacrifice, when in fact their police force rounded up more Jews proportionately for the Nazis than in any other occupied country, and that the sole policeman who objected was ostracised by colleagues after the war.

One chapter skilfully deconstructs another, lesser myth: that England's players strongly objected to being made to give the Nazi salute before they thrashed Germany 6-3 in Berlin in 1938.

In their autobiographies, both Eddie Hapgood and Stanley Matthews proclaim that the team were incensed, protested and saluted with bitter reluctance. But going to contemporary sources, Kuper shows the event caused hardly a ripple at the time, either in the British press or at the FA. This, after all, was the shabby time of appeasement. And, as Kuper points out, just one year later in Milan, England's players gave the Fascist salute to all four corners of the ground before a match with Italy.

When in Berlin...the England team give the Nazi salute before their 1938 game with Germany

Two minor qualifications. The Italy team that won the 1936 Olympic title in Berlin was not composed of true "students" but of masquerading young professionals; three of them figured two years later in the Italy team that won the World Cup. Foni and Rava were the full-backs in both sides.

Also, it is wrong to say Helmut Schoen continued the "Blood and Iron" policy of Sepp Herberger, his predecessor as West Germany coach. Schoen had always wanted to produce more technical, creative teams. This he did, with the substantial help of Franz Beckenbauer, even if it was some time before he allowed Beckenbauer to operate as a constructive libero, his role with Bayern Munich, thus opening the way to Total football.

April 1996

THE launch of Major League Soccer dominated the pages of *World Soccer* seven years ago. United States international Alexi Lalas was the cover star as new teams with exotic names such as San Jose Clash, Dallas Burn and Columbus Crew were unveiled to the American public.

Previewing the launch of the new League, Paul Gardner in New York wrote: "American soccer will be paying off a debt to FIFA. That was the deal: in 1990, when FIFA awarded the 1994 World Cup to the US Soccer Federation, the unwritten agreement was that the excitement and enthusiasm aroused by the tournament would be used as the springboard to launch a national pro league."

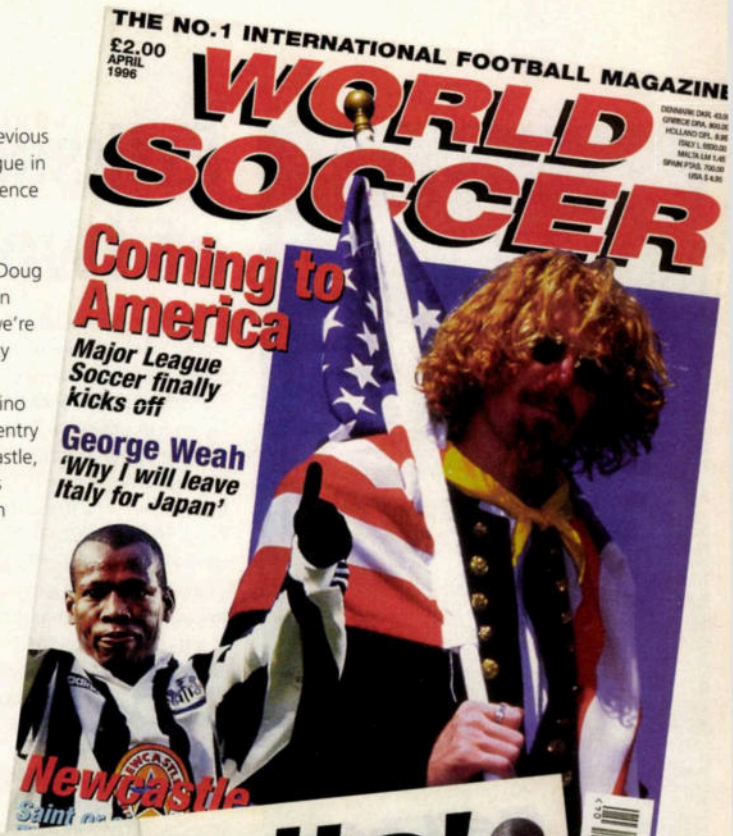
That Lalas was the most recognisable face of the new League said a great deal about MLS's attempts to hire star names. The best known – Colombian Carlos Valderrama and Mexican keeper Jorge Campos – had been brought in on salaries close to $1million, paid for by sponsors.

Gardner, in his account of how the MLS launch had been delayed to 1996, highlighted a contradiction in the League's hiring policy. He noted that "MLS had been going for Latin players. No British or Europeans had been signed. Yet of the 10 coaches, five had a British background. Not one was Latin."

A picture of Pele from the days of the NASL provided a reminder of previous attempts to launch a soccer league in the States, but there was confidence about MLS's future. "There's a genuine feeling of goodwill out there," said MLS commissioner Doug Logan. "Media reaction has been extraordinarily positive. I think we're going to be given an opportunity to prove ourselves."

Elsewhere in the issue, Faustino Asprilla had made an explosive entry into English football with Newcastle, while George Weah revealed his ambition to play in Japan, a plan that was never to materialise.

'Ball of confusion' was the headline on a story about the uncertain implications of the recent Bosman ruling. "Confusion is the name of the game, post-Bosman," wrote Keir Radnedge. "Ultimately, it seems the ruling will deliver even more power into the players' hands."



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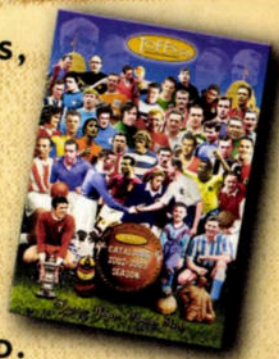

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